Making ice cream

For party desserts or a kiddies treat, home-made ice cream is everyone's favourite. The microwave will also be your favourite when you see the creamy smooth and subtly flavoured ice creams you can produce with it.

The secret of a smooth ice cream lies in the fat content, as this prevents large ice crystals forming during the freezing process. Double cream, whipped and flavoured, is a popular form of fat to use for ice creams, or, if you wish to reduce the quantity of cream, try using a custard base. The recipe for basic vanilla ice cream given here has a custard base, made with milk and egg yolks.

The microwave is perfect for cooking custards. Conventionally made egg custards are notoriously difficult: they stick and burn easily, and can overcook in seconds if you place the saucepan over direct heat. The microwave solves all those problems, however,

Left to right: *Chocolate, Vanilla and Strawberry Ice Cream*

SU JORGENSEN

since the food is heated rather than the container. You will also be able to achieve a smooth custard with comparatively little stirring.

For a smooth ice cream it is important to dissolve the sugar before freezing. So whisk the egg and sugar together until frothy, heat the milk and stir it in carefully to blend thoroughly. Then microwave the mixture until thick and creamy.

Try flavouring ice creams as suggested here, or experiment with your own ideas. Flavourings such as vanilla and peppermint are simple to add, while fruit purées can give you endless subtle variations as the seasons change. Alcohol can be used to dress up an ice cream, but be wary of adding too much — in large quantities it will prevent the mixture freezing; rum or brandy flavourings give good results and are less expensive. Add texture with nuts or chocolate drops or bits.

Freeze ice cream in shallow containers as the mixture will freeze more quickly. When it starts to harden around the edges, beat it well to add lightness and smoothness. Return it to the freezer to harden completely. To serve, remove from the freezer a little before time so it has time to soften, or thaw slightly in the microwave. Both flavour and texture are better when the ice is not totally frozen.

Vanilla ice cream

5 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this ice cream in scoops or blocks with wafers or biscuits. For other desserts, add sauces or fruits; fill hot pancakes, sponge flans or meringue shells.

275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp vanilla flavouring
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

How to microwave ice cream

Heat *the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until hot but not boiling. Meanwhile, break the eggs into a large freezer/microwave container, add the sugar and whisk.*

Whisk *the hot milk gradually into the eggs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking after 2 minutes, then every 30 seconds until custard just coats the back of a spoon.*

Stir *in the flavouring and place cling film on the custard so it is touching the surface to prevent skin forming. Allow to cool, then leave to chill thoroughly in the refrigerator.*

Whip *the cream until just thick and standing in soft peaks; fold into the cold custard. Cover and freeze about 1 hour until frozen at the edges and slushy in the centre.*

Whisk *the partially frozen ice cream with an electric mixer or food processor until the mixture is quite smooth. Cover and freeze for a further 3-4 hours until the ice cream is quite firm.*

To serve, *soften the ice cream for 30-45 minutes in the refrigerator or 20-30 minutes at room temperature; or microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds just before serving.*

Chocolate ice cream balls

10½ mins

Standing time: none

½ quantity Vanilla Ice Cream (see page 362)
225g / 8oz plain chocolate cake covering, or plain chocolate

MAKES 30

1 Put a baking tray in the freezer to chill.
2 Microwave the ice cream at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds to soften slightly. Use a melon baller to scoop the ice cream into balls. Place on the chilled baking tray, insert a cocktail stick into each. Return to the freezer to harden.
3 Break the chocolate into a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes until melted and smooth, stirring once or twice.
4 Quickly dip each ball in the chocolate, coating evenly. Return the chocolate to the microwave to soften if necessary. Place the dipped balls on the tray, remove the cocktail sticks and freeze until needed. Serve with rolled wafers.

VARIATION
While the coating chocolate is still moist, dip the balls quickly in finely chopped walnuts, crumbled cereals or hundreds and thousands.

Strawberry ice cream

6 mins

Standing time: none

2 × 400g / 14.1oz cans strawberries or 450g / 1lb fresh strawberries
275g / ½pt milk
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
275g / ½pt double or whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

1 Drain the canned strawberries thoroughly and chop (reserve the syrup for another dish). If using fresh strawberries, hull and mash them. Put the strawberries in a dish and chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.
2 Prepare the custard as directed in Steps 1-3 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362.
3 Whip the cream until thick and standing in soft peaks, then fold into the cold custard together with the chopped or mashed strawberries. Mix well.
4 Cover and freeze for about 1 hour until frozen around the edges and slushy in the centre. Remove from the freezer and whisk until completely smooth.
5 Cover and freeze for 3-4 hours until firm. Soften to serve, see Step 6, page 362.

Cook's notes

For a smooth ice cream, blend then sieve the strawberries. Add a few drops of colouring with the cream for a deeper colour. Adding 50g / 2oz crumbled meringues after whisking the partially frozen ice cream also gives a good texture.

RAY DUNN

Chocolate Ice Cream Balls

Chocolate ice cream

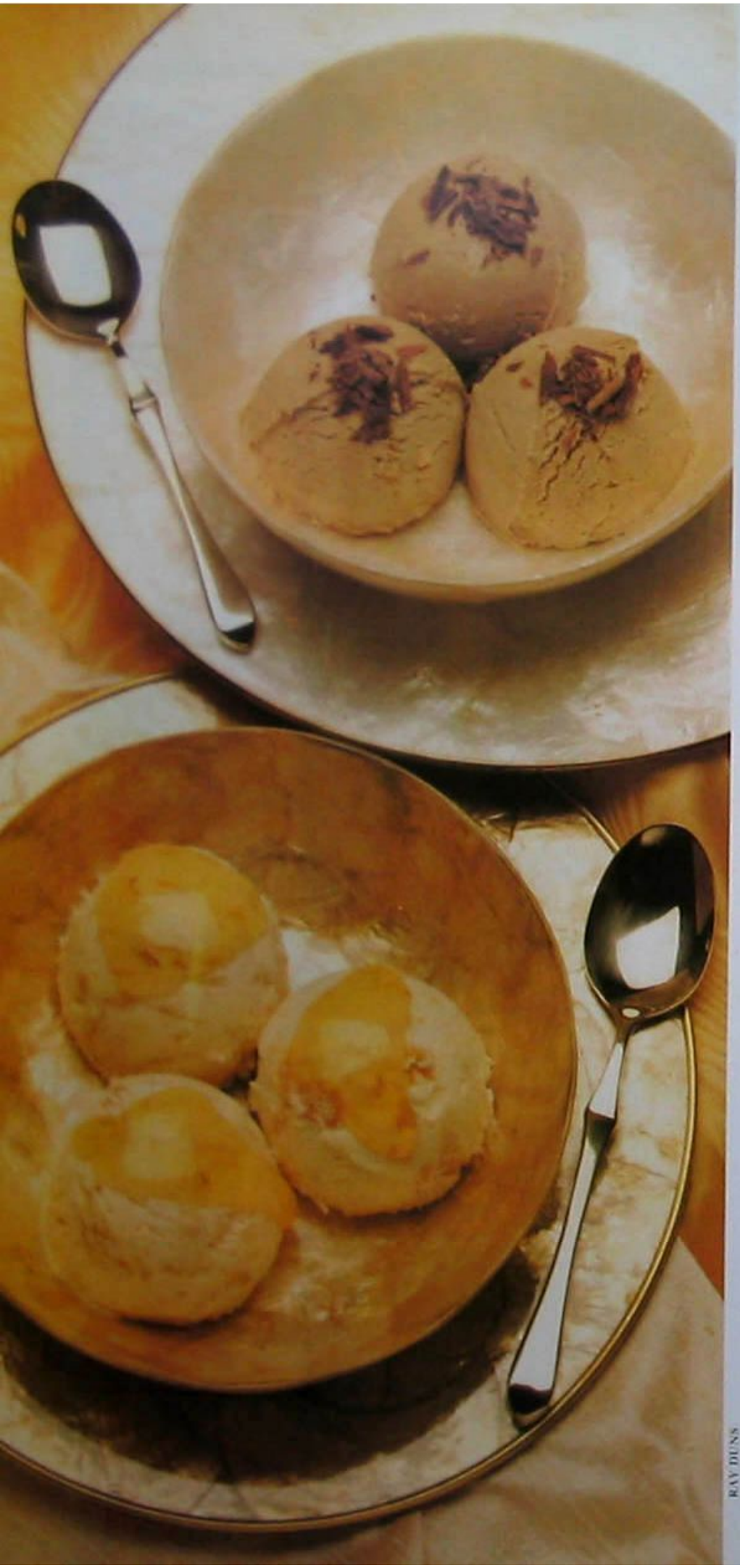
8½ mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs
75g / 3oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz plain chocolate
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

1 Microwave the milk as directed in step 1 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362 and combine the eggs and sugar as directed. Gradually whisk in the milk.
2 Break the chocolate into a small bowl; microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until melted. Whisk into the egg mixture.
3 Continue to microwave and freeze as directed in Steps 2-6, page 362.



RAY DUNS

Coffee ice cream

5 mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt milk
30ml / 2tbls instant coffee granules
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
125ml / 5fl oz double or whipping cream
125ml / 5fl oz natural yoghurt
grated plain chocolate, to serve

SERVES 6-8

1 Pour the milk into a jug and sprinkle over the coffee granules. Heat the milk and continue to prepare and microwave the custard as directed in Steps 1-3 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362.
2 Whip the cream and fold into the cold custard with the yoghurt. Cover and freeze for about 1 hour until frozen at the edges.
3 Whisk, freeze and serve as directed in Steps 5-6 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362. Sprinkle with grated chocolate, if wished.

Almond ice cream

5 mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs
75g / 3oz caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp almond flavouring
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream
50g / 2oz ratafias or macaroons, crumbled
golden syrup, to serve

SERVES 6-8

1 Prepare and microwave the custard as directed in Steps 1-4 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362.
2 Whisk the partially frozen ice cream until smooth and stir in the crumbled ratafias or macaroons.
3 Cover and freeze for 3-4 hours until firm and serve as directed in Step 6 on page 362. Drizzle with golden syrup just before serving.

Above: *Coffee Ice Cream*
Below: *Almond Ice Cream*

Pineapple ice cream

3½ mins

Standing time: none

1 large pineapple
caster sugar for sprinkling
finely grated rind and juice of 1 small lemon
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar
125ml / 5fl oz milk
1 egg
50g / 2oz caster sugar
125ml / 5fl oz double cream
30ml / 2tbls kirsch or rum

SERVES 6

1 Cut the pineapple in half lengthways, including the leaves. Scoop out the flesh, taking care not to pierce the skin. Drain and reserve the juice; sprinkle each pineapple half with caster sugar, cover and chill until serving.
2 Remove the pineapple core and finely chop or process the flesh. Put into a container, stir in the lemon rind, juice and icing sugar. Cover and freeze until slushy.
3 Microwave the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until hot. Break the egg into a freezer / microwave container and whisk in the sugar. Continue to prepare the custard as directed in Steps 2-4 for the Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362, microwaving the egg and milk mixture for only 2-2½ minutes. The first freezing need only be 45 minutes.
4 Whisk the ice cream until smooth, stir in the frozen pineapple and kirsch or rum. Cover and freeze for 2-3 hours until firm.
5 To serve, scoop or spoon the ice cream into the pineapple shells and serve immediately.

Cook's notes

This Pineapple Ice Cream softens more quickly than the other flavoured ice creams because of the high proportion of pineapple and juice in it. For this reason, the ice cream does not need softening in the microwave or refrigerator before serving.

Walnut Spice Pie

Walnut spice pie

9½ mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked Digestive Crumb Case (see page 32)
275ml / ½pt milk
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream
50g / 2oz crystallized or preserved ginger, chopped
75g / 3oz walnuts, finely chopped
50g / 2oz plain chocolate

SERVES 6-8

1 Pour the milk into a jug, sprinkle over the nutmeg and cinnamon, stir well, then continue as directed in Steps 1-4 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362.
2 Remove from the freezer and whisk until smooth. Stir in the chopped ginger and walnuts. Spoon the mixture into the prepared crumb case, smooth the surface and freeze for 2-3 hours.
3 To serve, transfer the pie to the refrigerator for about 20 minutes to soften. Microwave the chocolate in a small bowl at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes; stir once or twice. Drizzle over the pie.

Apricot brandy ice cream

25 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz pre-soaked dried apricots
575ml / 1pt water
30ml / 2tbls icing sugar
45ml / 2tbls brandy or Drambuie
275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

1 Put the apricots and water in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes, stirring several times until the apricots are soft and the liquid mostly absorbed. Cool, then purée in a blender or food processor. Stir in the icing sugar and brandy or Drambuie. Cover and chill in the refrigerator.
2 Prepare and microwave the custard as directed in Steps 1-3 for Vanilla Ice Cream, page 362.
3 Whip the cream until just thick and standing in soft peaks, then fold into the cold custard with the apricot purée. Freeze for 1 hour.
4 Whisk the ice cream until smooth. Cover and freeze for 3-4 hours. Soften as directed in Step 6 on page 362 before serving with wafer biscuits, if wished.

Clever ways with potatoes

From main meals and accompaniments to suppers and snacks, the potato provides an interesting variety of delicious dishes that cook quickly and successfully in the microwave.

Apart from being one of the most popular of vegetables, potatoes also provide us with valuable nutrients. They are a good and economical source of protein, are rich in Vitamin C and also contain small amounts of Vitamin B, iron and calcium.

Because of their tremendous versatility, potatoes can be served in a variety of delicious and interesting ways: serve the Cheesy-topped Shepherd's Pie as a family meal and the Stuffed Potato Shells as a stylish buffet party savoury.

Although you cannot fry or crisp potatoes successfully or safely (as cooking in large quantities of fat is dangerous), boiled, mashed and jacket potatoes all microwave beautifully.

Mashed potatoes

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

900g / 2lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
75ml / 3fl oz water
25g / 1oz butter
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put potatoes and water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11 minutes, stirring once.

2 Let stand for 5 minutes; drain. Add butter and seasoning; mash well. Serve hot as an accompaniment or to top Shepherd's Pie.

Shepherd's pie

26 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
2 carrots, diced
15ml / 1tbls water
175g / 6oz frozen peas, thawed
300g / 10.6oz can condensed cream of tomato soup
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
1 quantity Mashed potatoes, see recipe left
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

Potato salad

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb new potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
75ml / 3fl oz water
125ml / 4fl oz mayonnaise
4 celery stalks, chopped
20ml/4tsp made English mustard
onion salt and pepper

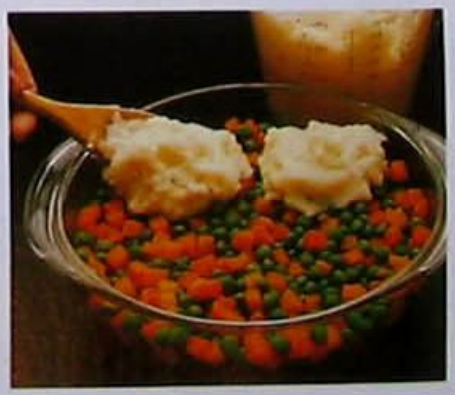
SERVES 4

1 Place the cubed potatoes and water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes or until tender, stirring after half the time. Let stand for 5 minutes. Drain.
2 In a bowl, combine the mayonnaise, celery, mustard, onion salt and pepper and spoon over potatoes while still warm. Toss lightly and serve warm or chilled.

Potato salad for one: Cook 1 diced new potato (weighing 175g / 6oz) in 15ml / 1tbls water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until tender. Stand for 3 minutes; drain. Mix 30ml / 2tbls mayonnaise with 1 chopped celery stalk and a little mustard, onion salt and pepper to taste. Add to potato and toss together lightly. Serve warm or chilled.

How to microwave Shepherd's pie

Put *minced beef and onion into 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once; drain. Put carrots and water in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until tender; drain.*



Mix *carrots with thawed peas. Stir the soup, purée, sauce and seasonings into meat mixture and cover with the vegetables. Spoon mounds of mashed potato on top and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until heated through.*

Top *the mashed potato with grated cheese and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3½ minutes, or until the cheese melts and the potato is heated through, rotating the dish after half the cooking time. Leave to stand for 8 minutes to complete cooking.*

Stuffed potato shells

10½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 old potatoes (each weighing 150-200g / 5-7oz)
1 streaky bacon rasher
salt and pepper
50ml / 2fl oz soured cream
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 spring onion, sliced

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

When making Stuffed potato Shells, reserve scooped out centres to use for making potato cakes, fish cakes, and so on. If liked, add this potato to stews to help thicken the gravy.

How to microwave Stuffed potato shells

Scrub *the potatoes and pierce with a fork. Arrange potatoes on a roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until just tender, rearranging and turning over after half the cooking time. Let stand for 5 minutes to complete the cooking. Keep covered while standing to hold the heat.*

Place *the bacon rasher between 2 layers of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until crisp. Chop and set aside.*

Cut *each potato into quarters. Scoop out the centres, leaving 6mm / ¼in of potato next to the skin. Place the shells on a serving plate.*

Sprinkle *potato shells with salt and pepper. Spread each with a thin layer of soured cream. Sprinkle with cheese, onion and bacon.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, or until the cheese melts, rotating the plate after half the cooking time.*

Adapting a recipe: quiches

If quiche is a favourite in your family, see how easy they are to make in your microwave. Super quick pastry with a variety of fillings will give you deliciously attractive end results.

Making quiches in your conventional oven can be time-consuming. A half baked pastry case to begin with will take the best part of 20 minutes cooking. When you make a quiche in the microwave the pastry still has to be cooked in advance but it takes only 5-6 minutes.

Microwaved pastry has to be completely cooked before adding a custard filling or it will absorb too much moisture before the custard sets and become soggy.

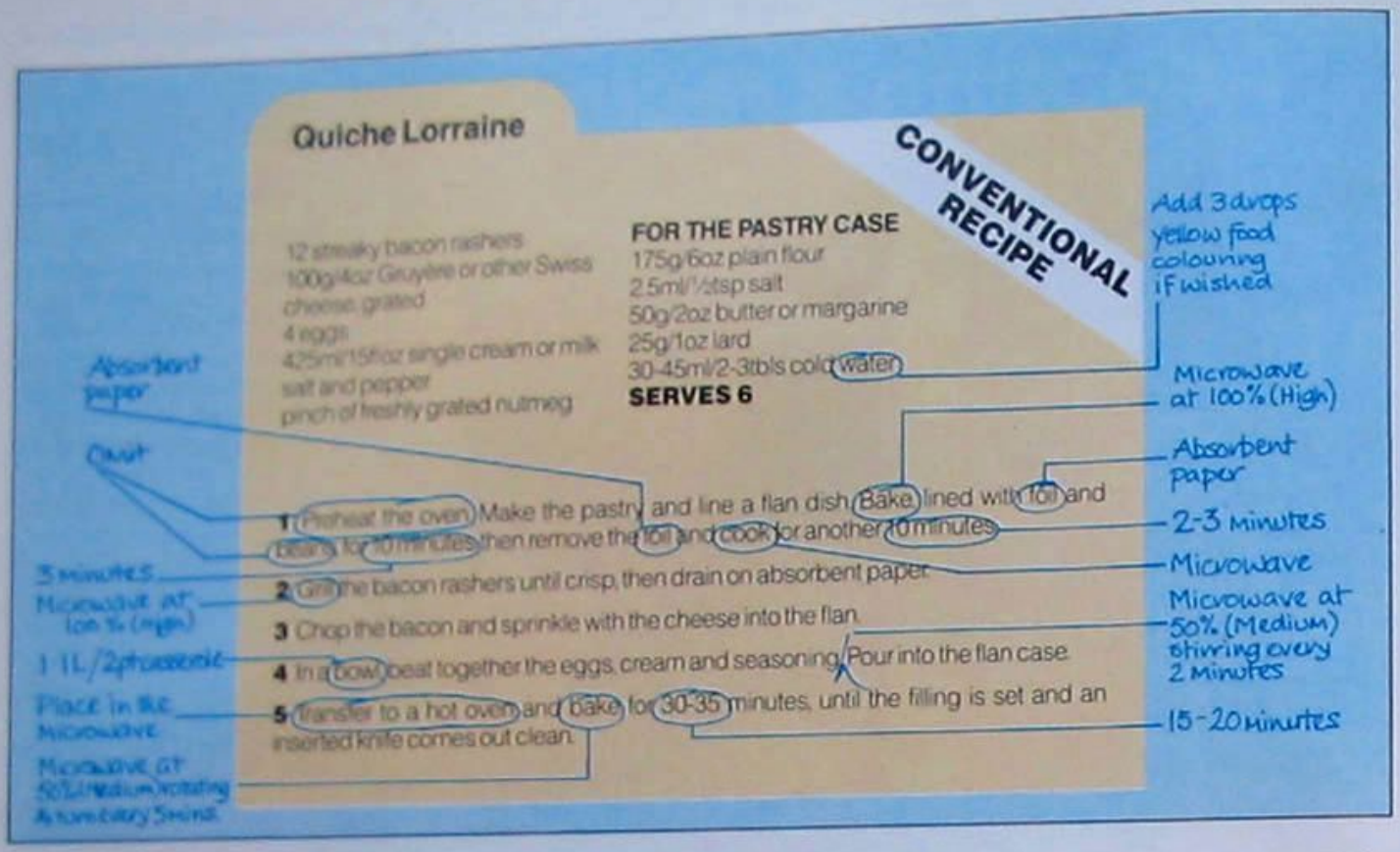
It is also easier and safer to partially cook the custard filling before adding it to the pastry case. In this way you can stir the custard while it is thickening slightly and be sure of a smooth and even-textured filling. Because eggs and cream are delicate foods, cook the custard separately and in the pastry case on 50% (Medium).

Rotate the quiche dish a quarter turn 4 times during cooking to ensure an even set.

Quiches make a refreshing change both at family meal-times and for more formal occasions. Serve for a light luncheon with a crisp green salad or try them piping hot with a baked potato and a winter salad for those colder evenings. However you serve quiches, the microwave will make your life easier in preparing them.

Asparagus Quiche

PAUL WEBSTER


Quiche Lorraine
CONVENTIONAL RECIPE
12 streaky bacon rashers
100g/4oz Gruyère or other Swiss cheese, grated
4 eggs
425ml/15fl oz single cream or milk
salt and pepper
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
FOR THE PASTRY CASE
175g/6oz plain flour
2.5ml/½tsp salt
50g/2oz butter or margarine
25g/1oz lard
30-45ml/2-3tbls cold water
SERVES 6
1 Preheat the oven. Make the pastry and line a flan dish. Bake, lined with foil and beans, for 10 minutes, then remove the foil and cook for another 10 minutes.
2 Grill the bacon rashers until crisp, then drain on absorbent paper.
3 Chop the bacon and sprinkle with the cheese into the flan.
4 In a bowl, beat together the eggs, cream and seasoning. Pour into the flan case.
5 Transfer to a hot oven and bake for 30-35 minutes, until the filling is set and an inserted knife comes out clean.
Add 3 drops yellow food colouring if wished
Absorbent paper
Microwave at 100% (High)
Absorbent paper
2-3 minutes
Microwave
Microwave at 50% (Medium) stirring every 2 minutes
15-20 minutes

Quiche Lorraine

32 mins

Standing time: 13 mins

12 streaky bacon rashers
100g / 4oz Gruyère cheese, grated
4 eggs
425ml / 15fl oz single cream or milk
salt and pepper
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

PASTRY CASE
175g / 6oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
25g / 1oz lard or white vegetable fat
30-45ml / 2-3tbls cold water combined with 3 drops yellow food colouring optional

SERVES 6

1 First make the pastry case. Sift together the flour and salt, then cut in the butter and lard until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

2 Add the water, a little at a time, stirring with a fork until the mixture starts to cling together.

3 Form the pastry into a ball then roll out on a floured surface to a circle 5cm / 2in larger than the top of a 23cm / 9in flan dish.

4 Transfer the pastry to the dish then leave to relax in a cool place or in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Trim the pastry overhang to 12mm / ½in to allow for a high rim.

5 Place the left index finger inside the rim and the right thumb and index on the outside of the rim. Push the pastry into a 'V' shape every 12mm / ½in. Pinch to make a sharp edge.

6 Prick the pastry case with a fork all around the bend of the dish, across the base and around the edge. Line the pastry base with a double layer of absorbent paper and Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, rotating the dish ¼ turn every minute.

7 Remove the absorbent paper and cook on 100% (High) for a further 2-3 minutes. The pastry is cooked when the base is dry and opaque. If the sides of the pastry case should collapse during cooking it will be pliable enough to push them back into shape.

8 To prepare the quiche filling: place 6 rashers of bacon on 3 layers of absorbent paper; cover with absorbent paper and place remaining rashers on top. Cover with more absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the bacon is cooked, but looks slightly underdone. Remove from the absorbent paper and stand for 3-5 minutes.

9 Chop the bacon and sprinkle, with the cheese, over pastry case.

10 Meanwhile, beat the eggs with milk or cream and seasonings in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes, until thoroughly heated. Stir every 2 minutes.

11 Stir the custard mixture once more and pour into the flan case. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, or until set. Rotate the dish ¼ turn every 5 minutes. The quiche is set when an inserted knife comes out clean. Let stand, for 10 minutes. Decorate with tomato slices sprinkled with cheese. Grill to brown.

Microtips

Take great care when you are microwaving the custard filling in the jug. It needs to be thickened enough to aid the set when it is transferred to the quiche, but if you cook it too much it will turn to scrambled egg.

How to make Quiche Lorraine

Line *a 23cm / 9in flan dish with pastry. Using your fingers push the pastry into a 'V' shape every 12mm / ½in. Pinch to make sharp edges.*

Prick *the pastry at the bend of the dish with a fork. Prick the base and also around the sides. Line the base with a double layer of absorbent paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; rotate ¼ turn every minute. Remove the absorbent paper and microwave for 2-3 minutes.*

Beat *together the eggs, cream or milk and seasonings. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes.*

Sprinkle *the chopped, cooked bacon and grated cheese over the base of the flan case and pour in the hot, partially cooked custard filling.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes; rotate the dish ¼ turn every 5 minutes. Leave to stand, uncovered, for 10 minutes.*

RAY DUNS

Asparagus quiche

29 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Use canned asparagus spears to make this elegant quiche especially trouble free. If asparagus is in season use fresh and cook in the microwave (see page 167), then drain and use as for canned.

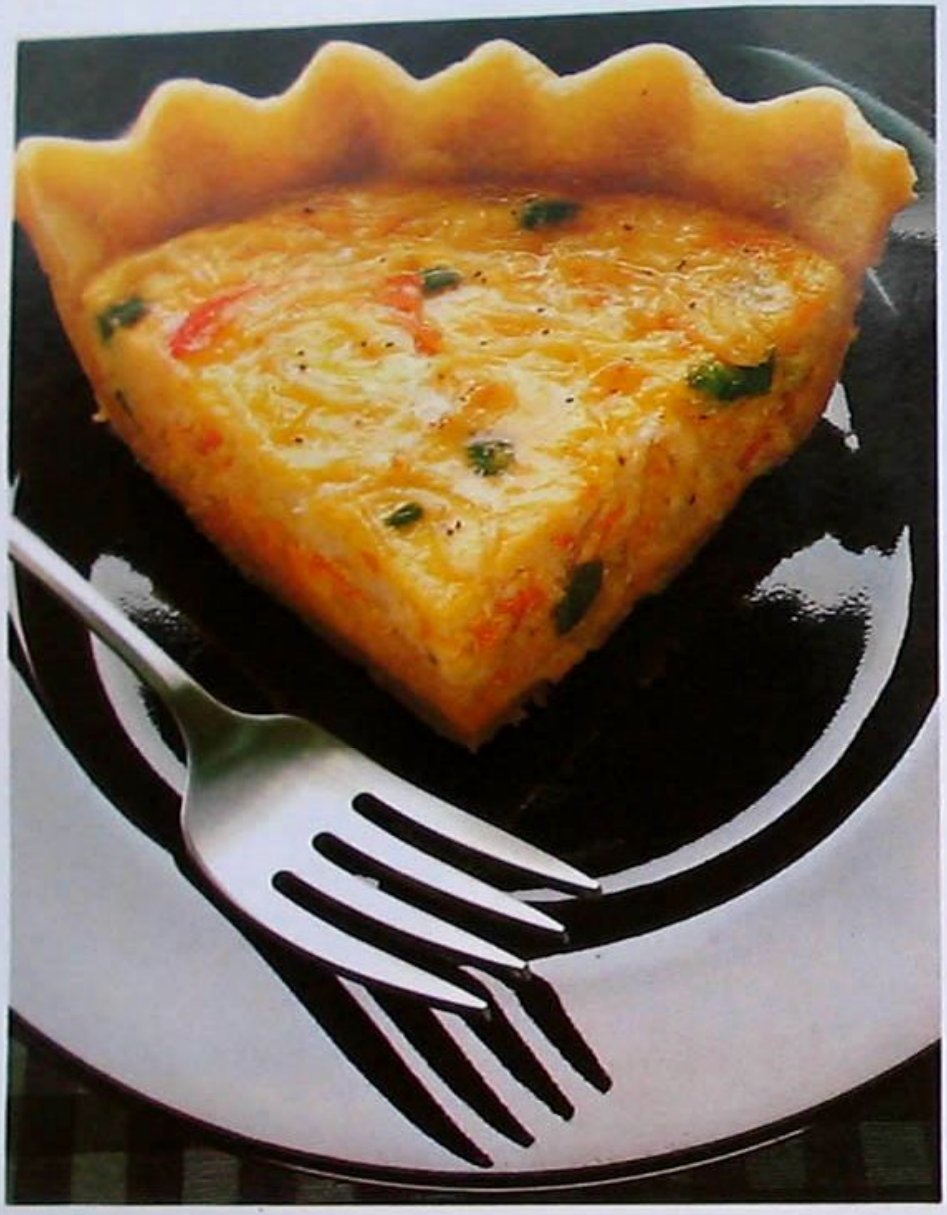
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
175g / 6oz lean cooked ham
225ml / 8fl oz single cream
175ml / 6fl oz milk
6 eggs
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt
large pinch of white pepper
12 canned or fresh asparagus spears

SERVES 6

1 Cut 12 thin slices from the ham for the garnish; chop the rest.
2 Sprinkle the chopped ham into the pastry case and set aside.
3 Combine the cream, milk, eggs, grated cheese, salt and pepper in a medium-sized bowl and beat well.
4 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, or until thoroughly heated, stirring every minute. Stir again, then pour over the ham in the pastry case.
5 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes rotating the dish ¼ turn every 5 minutes. 5 minutes before the quiche is cooked remove and arrange the asparagus spears, pointed ends towards the centre, like the spokes of a wheel. Arrange a strip of ham between each asparagus spear.
6 Return to the cooker for 5 minutes or until cooked. Leave to stand, uncovered, for 10 minutes.

Microtips

To reheat an individual slice of leftover quiche, place the slice on absorbent paper on a plate, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds-1 minute or until warm and the quiche transfers heat to the bottom of the plate.



Crab Quiche

Crab quiche

26 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
½ green pepper, chopped
1 onion, chopped
170g / 6oz can crab meat, drained
113g / 4oz can peeled prawns, drained
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
3 eggs
150ml / ¼pt milk
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Place the pepper and onion in a medium-sized bowl, cover, and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
2 Spread the onion and pepper mixture over the pastry base and top with the mixed crab and prawns. Sprinkle with grated cheese.
3 Beat together the eggs and milk and season to taste.
4 Heat the custard mixture, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes or until hot. Stir every minute and at the end of the cooking time.
5 Pour the custard into the pastry case. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 16-18 minutes or until set, rotating the dish ¼ turn every 5 minutes. The quiche is cooked when a knife inserted halfway between the edge and the centre comes out clean. Stand, uncovered, for 10 minutes.

Fish casseroles

Fish casseroles are delicious, nutritious and very easy to prepare. Results are even more successful when fish are quickly cooked in the microwave.

Perhaps more than other food, fish benefits enormously from being cooked in the microwave. It retains its flavour and texture and can be made into a filling and highly nutritious meal when combined in a casserole with other ingredients.

These protein packed meals for family and friends can be made as plain or as spicy as you wish, adjust the spices to taste.

All the recipes given here are quite suitable for freezing; make a large casserole such as Bosun's Stew and freeze half of it for later use. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) until thawed but still icy in the centre, then reheat at 50% (Medium) until hot.

Remember that all fish cooks very quickly in the microwave, so it is important not to overcook any of the casseroles, or they will lose their lovely delicate flavour. Make the most of the many varieties of fish and experiment with different types of white fish.

Pineapple Fish Stew

SU JORGENSEN

Bosun's stew

21 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 streaky bacon rashers
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in dice
400g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp paprika
10ml / 2tsp capers
salt and pepper
700g / 1½lb cod fillets, skinned and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
100g / 4oz cooked peeled prawns
chopped parsley, to garnish
paprika, to garnish
bay leaf, to garnish

SERVES 6

RAY DUNS

How to microwave Bosun's stew

Lay *the bacon between sheets of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until crisp. Leave to stand for 2 minutes.*

Crumble *the bacon into a large casserole. Add oil, onion and garlic, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until onion is tender.*

Add *the potatoes, stir well, then cover the casserole with cling film or a lid and cook for a further 3 minutes at 100% (High).*

RAY DUNS

Stir *in tomatoes, stock cube, parsley, bay leaf, paprika, capers. Season. Cover, microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, until potatoes are tender.*

Carefully *stir in the fish and prawns then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until the fish is cooked.*

Leave, *covered, to stand for 3 minutes. Garnish with chopped parsley and paprika and add the finishing touch with a bay leaf.*

Pineapple fish stew

7 mins

Standing time: none

250g / 9oz white fish, skinned, boned, cut in bite-sized pieces
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
2 spring onions, chopped
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
250g / 9oz cooked, peeled prawns
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground aniseed
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground turmeric
1 bay leaf
10ml / 2tsp grated orange zest
2.5ml / ½tsp cayenne pepper
275ml / ½pt boiling water
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls dry sherry
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
250g / 9oz fresh or canned unsweetened pineapple chunks, drained
boiled rice, to serve

SERVES 4

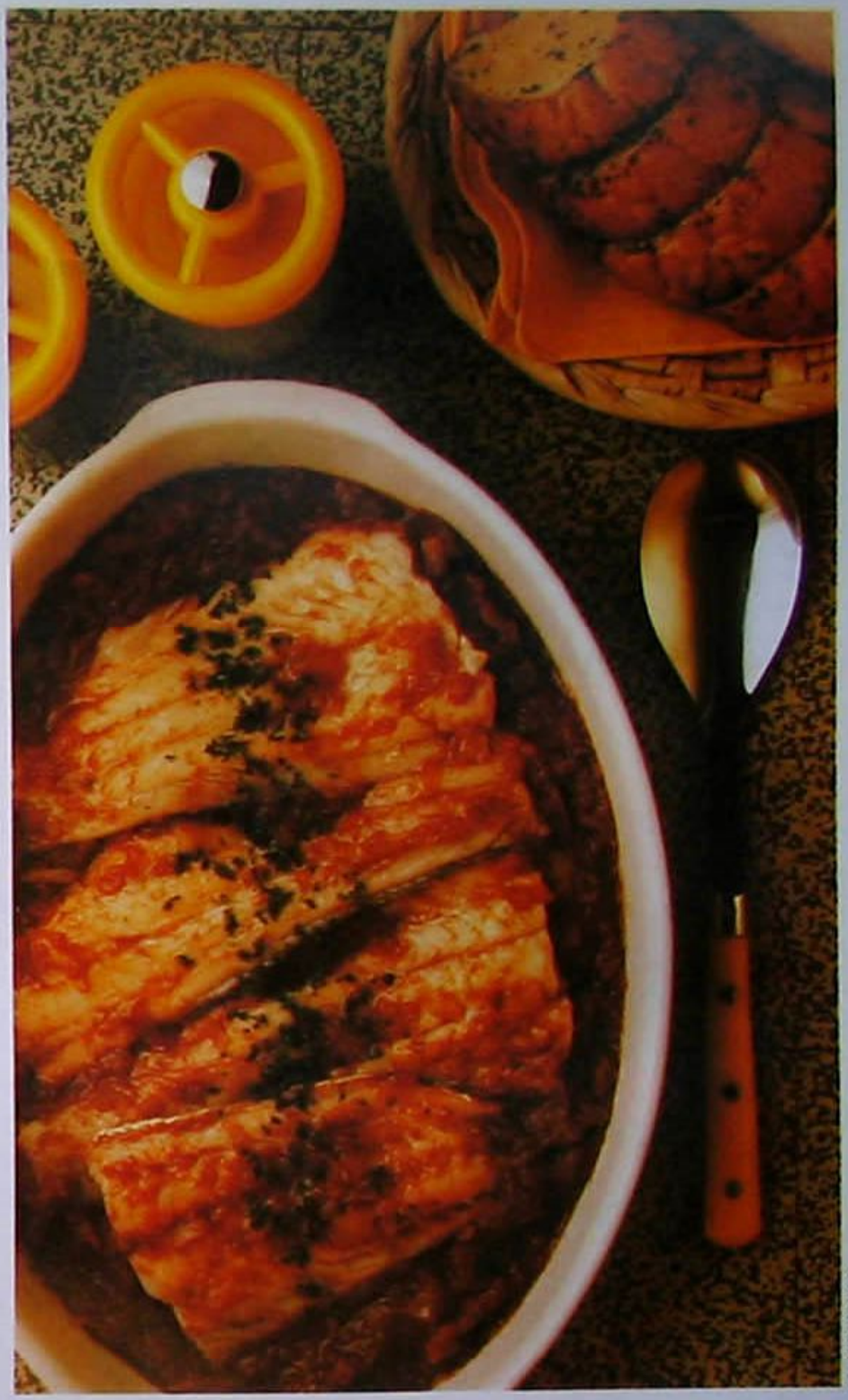
1 Combine the fish, oil, spring onions and garlic in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Stir in the prawns, salt, pepper, aniseed, turmeric, bay leaf, orange zest and cayenne. Stir in the boiling water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Dissolve the cornflour in the sherry and soy sauce. Stir into the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring every minute, until the sauce thickens. Stir in the pineapple, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until the pineapple is hot. Serve with rice.

Spicy standby casserole

17 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 onions finely chopped
1 large garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
4 bay leaves
salt and pepper
700g / 1½lb frozen white fish fillets



Spicy Standby Casserole

SERVES 6

1 Combine the onions, garlic and olive oil in a large, shallow dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until onions are soft.
2 Stir in the tomato purée and cinnamon. Add the bay leaves and 225ml / 8fl oz water; season to taste. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until the sauce is thick.
3 Lay the frozen fish fillets in 2 or 3 layers in the dish. Spoon over the sauce to cover the fish, cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, until the fish flakes easily. Turn the fillets over and rearrange every 3 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Elegant dinner for four

Prepare a meal to satisfy sophisticated tastes — and do the bulk of the work in advance. All the dishes can be reheated successfully, so you can relax and enjoy the meal with your guests.

This simple but elegant meal is easy to cook and reheat by microwave. The delicate flavour of the main dish, Pork with Artichokes, is retained far more efficiently than by conventional direct reheating, which could congeal the sauce and dry the piped potato. In fact, the same applies to all the dishes — cook them in advance, then reheat them in sequence — this way you can spend more time with your guests. (Your microwave is a great secret to have up your sleeve when it comes to carefree dinner party catering!)

Once you have served the soup you can start to reheat the meat — make sure the pork and artichokes are evenly spread in the potato ring for thorough reheating.

As a special decoration for the oranges, remove the zest of one orange, omitting the pith, and cut it into thin strips. Microwave at 100% (High) with 150ml / ¼pt water for 5 minutes. Drain off and discard the water, then sprinkle the strips on the caramel oranges before serving.

If wished, some of the dishes can be prepared well in advance and frozen. The soup, pork with artichokes and courgettes can be frozen (courgettes should only be frozen for a short time or they will become soft). Mashed potato can be frozen, but for best results pipe a border of freshly cooked potato for this dish.

Use a clear, heatproof bowl for microwaving the dessert syrup so that you can see it colouring. Take it from the cooker as soon as it starts to brown — it will continue to darken afterwards. Be careful not to overcook the syrup.

PAUL WEBSTER

MENU

Fresh Lettuce Soup
A subtle-flavoured, creamy hot soup

Pork with Artichoke Hearts
A rich casserole in a piped potato border

Courgettes with Tomatoes
A lightly cooked vegetable combination

Caramel Oranges
Whole fresh fruit laced with Grand Marnier

SERVES 4

Countdown

The day before
Prepare, microwave and refrigerate the Caramel Oranges. Peel the oranges on a board, using a knife to remove the pith. Turn them several times in the syrup. Microwave and chill the soup.

Early on the day
Clean the potatoes and courgettes and cut up, then leave in water. Prepare and slice the meat. Leave covered in the refrigerator.

1¼ hours before serving
Microwave the potatoes. Allow to cool slightly after mashing, then pipe around the edge of the main serving dish. If the dish is suitable, brown under the grill. Cook the courgettes and leave to stand, covered. Microwave the pork and artichokes and arrange in the centre of the mashed potato border. Sprinkle a little paprika over each potato rosette.

10-15 minutes before serving
Heat the soup through for 10-12 minutes. Stir once during heating and again on removal from the cooker. Serve at once.

While soup is served
Microwave the Pork with Artichoke Hearts at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Leave to stand for 3 minutes. Reheat the courgettes by microwaving at 100% (High) for 3 minutes while clearing the soup plates. Sprinkle with chopped parsley before serving.

Fresh lettuce soup

35½ mins

Standing time: none

2 lettuces, cleaned and shredded
100g / 4oz frozen leaf spinach
25g / 1oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt chicken stock
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt single cream
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls chopped chervil

SERVES 4

1 Mix the lettuce and spinach in a large bowl. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8 minutes, stirring once. Set aside, covered.
2 Place the butter in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Add the onion and microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes.
3 Stir in the flour, then add the stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes.
4 Add the lettuce, spinach and seasoning, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes, stirring several times.
5 Allow the soup to cool slightly, then purée it in a blender or by pressing through a sieve. Stir in the cream and herbs.
6 Microwave the soup at 100% (High) for 5 minutes to heat through, stirring before serving.

PAUL WEBSTER

Freezer notes

If you are going to freeze the soup, do not add the cream. Thaw and reheat the soup, stir in the cream and warm through.

Pork with artichoke hearts

28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb pork tenderloin *
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
100g / 4oz shallots * or small onions, left whole
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
200ml / 7fl oz chicken stock
salt and pepper
397g / 14oz can artichoke hearts, drained and halved
75ml / 3fl oz double cream
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley

POTATO BORDER
700g / 1½lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
125ml / 4fl oz water
25g / 1oz butter
salt and pepper
milk to mix
paprika to sprinkle

SERVES 4

1 First prepare the potato border. Place the potatoes and water in a 1.4L / 2½pt dish or casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes or until tender and easy to pierce with a knife.
2 Drain thoroughly, then leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 Mash the potatoes with the butter, salt and pepper using a fork or a potato masher, adding enough milk to make a piping consistency.

* Australia and New Zealand substitutes: Pork fillet, baby onions.

4 Fit a large piping bag with a star-shaped nozzle; fill with potato, pressing down firmly.
5 Pipe a border of potato rosettes around the edge of a large serving dish.
6 Sprinkle a little paprika over the border, or if preferred, brown quickly under the grill.
7 Remove any sinew or fat from the pork and cut the meat into 12mm / ½in-thick slices.
8 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil, meat and shallots to the dish and press down firmly onto the base of the browning dish.
9 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then turn the meat and shallots over. Sprinkle with the flour, then microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
10 Stir in the stock and seasoning, then cover with a lid or with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes.
11 Add the artichokes and cream, stir well then microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes to heat.
12 Stir, then arrange the pork and artichokes in the piped border.
13 Sprinkle chopped parsley over the dish before serving.

Cook's notes

If you do not have a browning dish, pre-seal the pork and shallots by frying briefly in a little oil in a conventional frying pan. Transfer the meat and shallots to a dish which is suitable for the microwave, and proceed from the stage where the flour is added, using 70% (Medium-High) throughout the recipe but keeping the timings the same.

Microtips

A heated browning dish will act in much the same way as a hot frying pan when meat is added, so it is advisable to dry off any excess dampness before adding the pork to the dish.

PAUL WEBSTER

Courgettes with tomatoes

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb courgettes
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Trim the courgettes and cut into 4cm / 1½in chunks. Cut each piece into quarters lengthways.
2 Place the courgettes in a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole with the tomatoes and toss to coat.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring halfway through the time to distribute the heat evenly.
4 Stir in the seasoning. Cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Caramel oranges

17 mins

Standing time: none

4 large or 8 small oranges
150g / 5oz sugar
200ml / 7fl oz hot water
15ml / 1tbls Grand Marnier

SERVES 4

Caramel Oranges

1 Cut all the zest and pith from the oranges. Place the oranges in a serving dish or suitable fruit bowl.
2 Place 150ml / ¼pt of the water into 1.4L / 2½pt ovenproof bowl with the sugar.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.
4 Stir well to dissolve the sugar, then microwave at 100% (High) for 13-16 minutes until the syrup is starting to turn a rich caramel colour.
5 Cool the syrup slightly, then stir in the remaining hot water and the Grand Marnier.
6 Pour the syrup over the orange and leave to marinate overnight in the refrigerator, turning occasionally before serving.
7 Serve the caramel oranges chilled with whipped cream, or a thick yoghurt for a flavour contrast.

Microtips

Do not let the sugar boil until it has all dissolved. Avoid stirring during cooking and watch carefully — if burning occurs in some areas, move the dish around gently holding it with an oven glove.

Microwaving peas

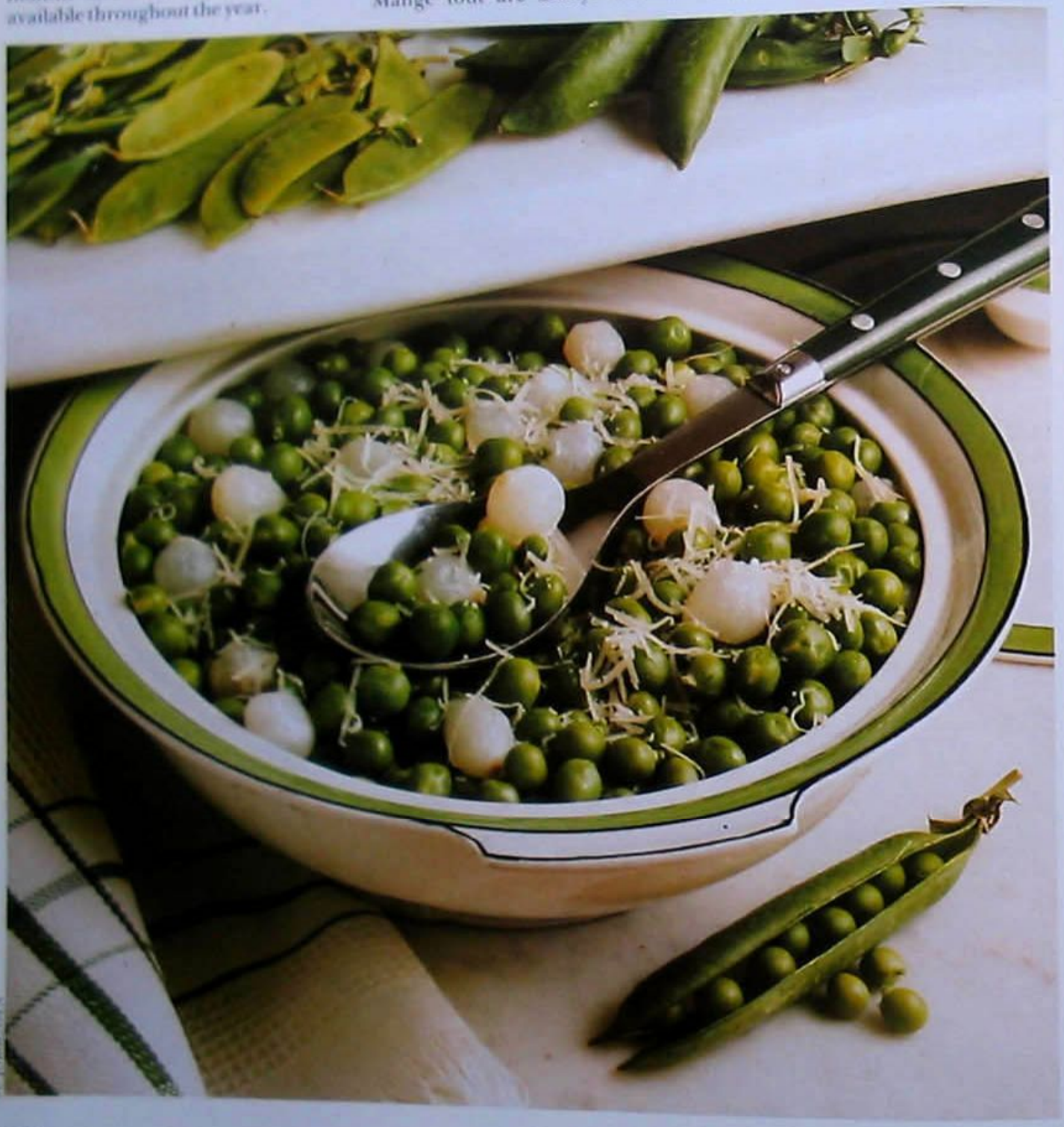
There is no waiting around for water to boil when cooking peas in the microwave: using just a knob of butter or drop of water they are in and out of the cooker within five minutes, still tasting freshly picked.

Very little beats the flavour of fresh garden peas and mange tout. The season extends through the summer months and frozen varieties are available throughout the year.

Cooking tender, young garden peas in the microwave requires no water, just a knob of butter. The peas retain all their flavour and acquire a delicious buttery taste.

Mange tout are always best if they are slightly crisp to bite. It is essential to test several times during cooking and remove them as soon as they are tender.

Cheesy Peas and Onions



How to select and store peas

Choose *garden peas with shiny, bright green pods, which are well-filled and crisp enough to snap easily. Light-coloured pods indicate over-maturity.*

Look *for mange tout (also known as snow or sugar peas) that are crisp and bright green. Avoid yellowing pods as these will be stringy.*

Garden peas *must be kept cold from the time they are picked or their sugar turns to starch and they toughen. Refrigerate, unwashed, in plastic bags.*

How to prepare and microwave garden peas

Shell *550-675g / 1¼-1½ lb peas before cooking, if possible, to retain all the flavour. This should produce about 225g / 8oz shelled peas. Place the peas in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole.*

Add *25g / 1oz butter to young peas, or 15ml / 1tbls water to mature peas. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge or a loose fitting lid and place in the cooker.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) until the peas are tender, stirring once. See chart, below, for cooking and standing times. Check tenderness regularly to avoid over-cooking.*

Microwave times for peas

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	PROCEDURE
Fresh Peas			
Garden Peas	550-675g / 1¼-1½lb (225g / 8oz shelled)	4-5 minutes	Follow step-by-step directions above. Leave to stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes.
Mange tout	100g / 4 oz	3-4 minutes	As above. Let stand, covered, for 2 minutes.
Frozen Peas			
Garden Peas	225g / 8oz pkt	4-6 minutes	Place in an 850ml / 1½pt covered casserole, with 30ml / 2tbls water. Stir once. Leave to stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
Mange tout	200g / 7oz pkt	3-4 minutes	Place in a 1.1L / 2pt covered casserole with 30ml / 2tbls water. Stir once. Standing time is not necessary.
Canned Peas			
Garden Peas	425g / 15oz	2-3 minutes	Drain all but 30ml / 2tbls liquid. Place in an 850ml / 1½pt covered casserole. Stir once.

Saucy Peas with Lettuce

Saucy peas with lettuce

6¼ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

225g / 8oz fresh shelled or frozen peas
1 celery stalk, sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
40g / 1½oz round lettuce, shredded
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
pinch of pepper
125ml / 4fl oz whipping cream

SERVES 4

1 In a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole, combine the peas, celery and water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the lettuce and re-cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, stirring once. Stand, covered, 3-5 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, put the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds to melt. Stir in the flour, sugar, salt and pepper. Blend in the cream. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes or until thickened, stirring twice.
4 Drain the vegetables, add the sauce and toss well.

Minted peas

5 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

225g / 8oz fresh shelled or frozen peas
4-5 spring onions, chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
5ml / 1tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mint
pinch of dried rosemary
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 In a 1L / 1¾pt casserole, combine all the ingredients except the lemon juice; cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Stir in the lemon juice and let stand for 3-5 minutes.

Cheesy peas and onions

5 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

The Parmesan cheese gives this dish a pleasantly tangy flavour.

225g / 8oz fresh shelled or frozen peas
100g / 4oz whole pickling onions
30ml / 2tbls water
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp dried chervil
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 In a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole, combine the peas, onions and water and cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once during the cooking time. Stir in the butter, chervil, salt and pepper. Let stand for 3-5 minutes, sprinkle with the cheese.

How to prepare and microwave mange tout

Cut *off the stalk end of the pod with the string attached. Pull the string down the pod; repeat at the other end.*

Place *the pods in a 23cm / 9in pie plate with 30ml / 2tbls water. Cover with cling film rolled back or a lid.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) until tender-crisp. See chart on page 381 for cooking and standing times.*

Stir fry mange tout

4 mins

Standing time: none

The browning dish gives this all the flavour and texture of a conventional stir fry, but the vegetables need only be stirred once during the cooking time in the microwave.

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
220g / 7oz packet frozen mange tout, separated (see Microtips, below)
100g / 4oz mushrooms, thickly sliced
40g / 1½oz fresh bean sprouts
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4

1 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions.
2 Add the butter or margarine to the dish and then add the remaining ingredients. Stir well and cover with the lid.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring after half the cooking time. Serve the mange tout immediately.

Microtips

To separate the mange tout, microwave them in the packet at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the pods can be pulled apart easily. Continue with the recipe.

Cheesecakes

Cooked or refrigerator-style, cheesecakes are delicious as a dessert or a special tea-time dish, and microwaving makes professional results so easy. Try this mouthwatering selection, and see!

For perfect cheesecakes every time, microwaving is ideal — bear these important points in mind for the best results.

When microwaving whole cheesecakes, frequent turning is essential — every 3 minutes in some cases. The mixtures are quite thick and cannot be stirred, so it is vital to turn the dish for even cooking. Place the dish on an inverted saucer or bowl to use the microwaves to the best effect.

Standing time is an integral part of the cooking process. Cheesecakes will go on cooking after they are removed from the cooker, so take them out when the edges are firm, but the centre is still not set. During standing the centre will finish cooking perfectly.

Refrigerated cheesecakes set with gelatine make use of the non-direct heat from the microwave for dissolving and melting, but whichever type of cheesecake you prefer, the microwave will make all the stages easier and quicker.

Valentine Cheesecake

Valentine cheesecake

2½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz butter
175g / 6oz wheatmeal biscuits, crushed
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar

FILLING
20ml / 4tsp powdered gelatine
juice of 1 lemon
225g / 8oz cream cheese
225g / 8oz curd cheese
75g / 3oz caster sugar
2 eggs, separated
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
225g / 8oz fresh or frozen raspberries (see Microtips)
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir in the crumbs and sugar.
2 Line the base of a 21.5cm / 8½in heart-shaped cake tin with greaseproof paper and grease thoroughly. Using the back of a spoon, press the mixture firmly and evenly over base of tin. Refrigerate for up to 1 hour. .
3 Put the lemon juice into a small bowl and sprinkle on the gelatine. Mix and soak until spongy. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½ minutes, stirring every 30 seconds until the gelatine is dissolved. Leave to cool slightly.
4 Beat together the cheeses, sugar, egg yolks and yoghurt.
5 Purée the raspberries in a blender or food processor, then press through a fine nylon sieve. Stir into the cheese mixture.
6 Beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks. Stir the dissolved gelatine into the cheese mixture, then fold in the egg whites.
7 Pour into the cake tin, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours to set. Loosen the edges with a knife dipped into hot water, then invert on cling film then back on to a plate. Whip the cream and use to decorate.

PAUL WEBSTER

Microtips

If using frozen raspberries, thaw them by microwaving at 20-30% (Defrost) 3-4 minutes. Stir the raspberries to loosen them and rearrange once during thawing time.

Cook's notes

For a more special presentation, make individual cheesecakes, dividing the base and filling between 6-8 small heart-shaped moulds. Top with rosettes of whipped cream.

Low-cal lime cheesecake

2½ mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz low-calorie margarine
150g / 5oz wheatmeal biscuits, crushed

FILLING
20ml / 4tsp powdered gelatine
45ml / 3tbls water
450g / 1lb curd cheese
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
juice of 1½ limes
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
few drops of green food colouring

TOPPING
2 kiwi fruit, peeled and thinly sliced
5 green grapes, halved and pips removed

SERVES 8-10

1 To make the base, place the margarine in a mixing bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Add the biscuit crumbs.
2 Using the back of a spoon, press the mixture into the base of a 20cm / 8in loose-bottomed cake tin. Refrigerate for about 1 hour.
3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a small bowl. Mix and leave to soak until spongy. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½ minutes, stirring every 30 seconds until the gelatine is dissolved.
4 Let the gelatine cool slightly. In a large bowl, beat the curd cheese and sugar together using a wooden spoon. Mix in the lime juice, yoghurt and a few drops of green colouring. Mix well, then stir in the dissolved gelatine.
5 Pour the mixture into the cake tin and return it to the refrigerator for 2-3 hours until set.
6 Transfer the cheesecake to a serving plate and arrange the sliced kiwi fruit and halved grapes on the top.

VARIATION
Lemon cheesecake: Substitute lemon juice for the lime, yellow colouring for green and use fruit such as pineapple slices, orange segments or apricot halves.

White chocolate cheesecake

21½ mins

Standing time: 30-45 mins

75g / 3oz butter
225g / 8oz chocolate wheatmeal biscuits, crushed

FILLING
700g / 1½lb cream cheese
2 eggs plus 1 egg yolk
30ml / 6tsps cornflour
225g / 8oz white chocolate
30ml / 2tbls crème de cacao
50g / 2oz chocolate, grated

SERVES 12-16

Almond ricotta cheesecake

15½ mins

Standing time: 30-45 mins

50g / 2oz ratafia biscuits
30ml / 2tbls toasted almonds
40g / 1½oz unsalted butter

FILLING
450g / 1lb Ricotta cheese
100g / 4oz caster sugar
30ml / 6tsps cornflour
2 eggs, beaten
312g / 7oz can mandarin oranges, drained

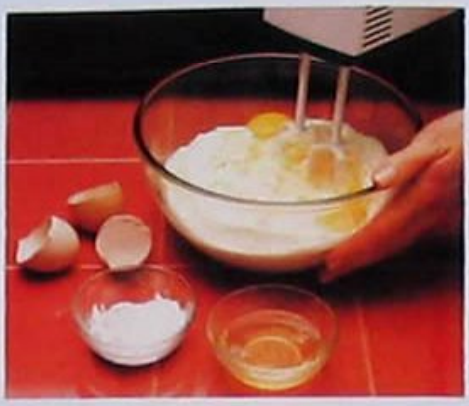
SERVES 6

1 Crush the biscuits with the almonds in a food processor, or add finely-chopped almonds to biscuits crushed with a rolling pin.
2 Melt the butter by microwaving in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Stir the butter into the biscuit crumbs and mix well. Divide the mixture between 6 individual ramekin dishes, pressing it over the base and half way up the sides. Chill well.
3 Beat together the Ricotta, sugar and cornflour, then add the eggs gradually, mixing well.
4 Chop 75g / 3oz of the mandarins lightly and add to the cheese filling mixture.
5 Divide the filling between the

How to microwave White chocolate cheesecake

Line *a 23cm / 9in dish with two wide strips of greaseproof paper to enable you to lift the cheesecake out when set. Cross the strips in the middle and leave enough paper above the rim to be able to hold ends firmly.*

Place *the butter in a bowl , cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes to melt. Stir in the biscuit crumbs and mix well. Press the crumbs mixture onto the base of the lined dish, on top of the paper strips.*



Place *the cream cheese in a large bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until soft. Beat well. Add the eggs, egg yolk and cornflour and mix thoroughly, beating until smooth and thick.*

Place *the chocolate in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3½-4 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes, until melted. Stir all but 30ml / 2tbls into the the cheese mixture with the crème de cacao. Spread on crumb base.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, or until the edges are set and the centre is beginning to cook. Turn every 3-4 minutes. Leave to stand for 30-45 minutes. Chill for at least 8 hours or overnight.*

Decorate *with grated chocolate. Coat rose leaves with the remaining melted white chocolate on the underside and leave to set. Peel off the leaves and use the chocolate ones to decorate.*

ramekins. Arrange in a circle on the base of the microwave.
6 Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15-20 minutes, rearranging them every 5 minutes, even if your microwave has a turntable.
7 Leave the cheesecakes to stand for 30-45 minutes and allow to cool. Refrigerate overnight, then decorate the tops with the remaining mandarins.

White Chocolate Cheesecake

Microtips

To brown almonds, microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring well after every minute. Allow to cool before using in recipes. The same method can be used to brown the nuts for the Hazelnut Cheesecake. Flake away the dry skin from the nuts after half the microwaving time.

RAY DUNS

Rosé glazed cheesecake

14¼ mins

Standing time: 30-45 mins

25g / 1oz butter
150g / 5oz ginger biscuits, crushed
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar

FILLING
2 eggs, separated
75g / 3oz caster sugar
400g / 14oz fromage blanc *
15ml / 1tbls lime juice
finely grated zest of 1 lemon

TOPPING
30ml / 2tbls lime marmalade
125ml / 4fl oz rosé wine
225g / 8oz strawberries, sliced

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter in a large bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, then stir in the biscuit crumbs and sugar.
2 Press the mixture into the base of an 18cm / 7in flan dish. Put in a cool place to set.
3 To make the filling, beat the yolks with the sugar in a large bowl until pale and creamy. Add the cheese, lime juice and lemon zest and beat well.
4 In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until they stand in soft peaks, then fold into the cheese mixture. Turn into the prepared flan case and smooth the top.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes then at 20-30% (Defrost) for 7-8 minutes. Cook until the edges are firm and the centre is just starting to set. Stand for 30-45 minutes; leave until cold.
6 Put the marmalade into a small bowl with the wine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until the liquid is syrupy, then cool.
7 Arrange the strawberry slices in rings all over the cheesecake, then spoon over the cooled glaze. Chill for at least 15 minutes before you attempt to cut the cheesecake so that the glaze has set properly. The cheesecake is best chilled before serving.

* Cream cheese in Australia and New Zealand.

Hazelnut cheesecake

22 mins

Standing time: 30-45 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
100g / 4oz unsalted butter
75g / 3oz light brown sugar

FILLING
350g / 12oz quark *
150g / 5oz caster sugar
75g / 3oz hazelnuts
3 eggs
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
225g / 8oz whipping cream

TOPPING
75g / 3oz plain flour
100g / 4oz light soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz unsalted butter
30ml / 2tbls icing sugar

SERVES 8

1 To make the base, sift the flour into a large bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

2 Stir in the sugar and work the mixture together to form a dough. Press this into the base of a 25cm / 10in flan dish. Prick the base all over with a fork. Microwave base at 70% (Medium-High) for 7 minutes, turning several times. It should be fairly dry on the surface when removed from the microwave. Let stand 30-45 minutes.

3 Beat together the quark and the sugar. Stir in the nuts, eggs and lemon juice.

4 In a separate bowl, add the cornflour to the cream and whisk until it forms soft peaks. Fold into the cheese mixture.

5 Pour the filling into the prepared dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, turning several times during cooking.

6 Remove when the edges are cooked and the centre is beginning to cook. (Cooking continues during standing time — about 30-45 minutes). Once set, chill lightly.

7 To make the topping, rub the flour, sugar and butter together to a crumbly mixture. Sprinkle over the top of the cheesecake and grill quickly at a medium heat until the topping is brown and crisp. Cool then chill well. Lay strips of paper over top, sift with icing sugar to form a lattice pattern.

* Low-fat cream cheese in Australia and New Zealand.

Cook's notes

As the cheesecake needs the topping to be grilled until brown and crisp, remember to use a dish which is non-metallic and suitable for the microwave, but fireproof too.

PAUL WEBSTER

Microwave kebabs

Kebabs are both easily and successfully cooked in the microwave. They make an excellent quick meal for the family, yet are also stylish enough to serve for impromptu entertaining.

Be adventurous when planning a kebab meal and vary the flavours and textures to suit personal preferences. For example, fish kebabs served with a crisp salad, make a delicious light meal, whereas meat kebabs arranged on a bed of fluffy boiled rice, form a more substantial meal. Fruit kebabs look attractive and make a refreshing finish any time.

Kebabs are an economical way of serving the more expensive cuts of meat like sirloin and rump steak, when cubes of meat are arranged on skewers with a colourful selection of vegetables. Use only wooden or bamboo skewers in the microwave; these are available from cookshops and Chinese supermarkets.

If there is time, marinate the meat for several hours or overnight for extra flavour, tenderness and colour. Should time be short, brush kebabs with a little soy sauce or proprietary brand of microwave seasoning before cooking for a good-coloured result.

Glazed Fruit Kebabs; Beef Saté and Peanut Sauce (and Chicken Saté variation)

DAVE KING

Shish Kebab

Beef saté and peanut sauce

16 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

450g / 1lb rump steak, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes

MARINADE
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
2 garlic cloves, crushed
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
5ml / 1tsp sugar
30ml / 2tbls dark soy sauce
1 onion, grated
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
salt

PEANUT SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
½ onion, grated
15ml / 1tbls dark brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp lime juice
75ml / 3oz crunchy peanut butter
150ml / ¼pt water
2.5-5ml / ½-1tsp chilli powder
40g / 1½oz creamed coconut

SERVES 4

1 In a bowl, combine the marinade ingredients. Stir in the meat and marinate for 10 minutes.
2 Thread the meat on to 8 bamboo skewers and place on a microwave roasting rack. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes or until meat is cooked, rearranging and turning the kebabs after half the time. Wrap in foil and stand for 6 minutes.
3 Place the oil and onion in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in the brown sugar, lime juice, peanut butter and water.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in chilli powder to taste with the creamed coconut, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Serve hot with the beef saté.

VARIATION
Chicken saté: use 450g / 1lb boneless chicken breasts, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes. Add to the marinade and follow the instructions given for Beef Saté. Serve hot with Peanut Sauce.

Shish kebab

11½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

MARINADE
175ml / 6fl oz dry white wine
75ml / 3fl oz vegetable oil
1 small onion, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce

KEBABS
450g / 1lb sirloin steak, cut into 16 bite-sized cubes
1 green pepper, cut into 16 pieces
8 small cherry tomatoes
4 mushrooms (optional)
45ml / 3tbls brandy
225g / 8oz rice, cooked, to serve

SERVES 4

1 In a medium bowl, combine the marinade ingredients. Add the cubes of meat and stir well until thoroughly coated with the marinade and leave to marinate for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
2 Place the green pepper in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until tender-crisp. Set aside.
3 Assemble the kebab ingredients on 4 wooden or bamboo skewers, alternating meat and vegetables. Place kebabs on a microwave roasting rack; brush with marinade. Cover with greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes or until the meat is cooked according to taste, rearranging and turning kebabs after half the time. Arrange on a bed of rice, cover and leave to stand for 2 minutes.
5 Meanwhile place the brandy in a small heatproof bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds or until the bowl is warm to the touch. Remove from cooker, ignite brandy and spoon over kebabs.

Cook's notes

Care must be taken when igniting the brandy. Do not have the kebabs on a plastic dish and do not heat brandy in a plastic bowl.

Marinated lamb kebabs

12 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

225g / 8oz can pineapple chunks in natural juice, drained and juice reserved
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
large pinch ground ginger
large pinch dried mint
450g / 1lb boneless leg of lamb, cut in 24 bite-sized cubes
8 small cherry tomatoes, or 4 medium tomatoes, halved
½ green pepper, cut into 8 pieces

SERVES 4

1 In a small bowl, combine the pineapple juice, soy sauce, lemon juice, ginger and mint. Stir in the cubes of meat and marinate for 10 minutes.
2 Remove meat from the marinade and arrange on 4 wooden or bamboo skewers, alternating the lamb with the vegetables and pineapple. Arrange on a microwave roasting rack.
3 Cover the kebabs with greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes or until the lamb is cooked according to taste. Leave to stand for 2 minutes.

Glazed fruit kebabs

7½ mins

Standing time: none

1 large red-skinned apple, cut into 8 chunks
1 orange, peel cut off and the flesh cut into 8 chunks
3 × 2.5cm / 1in thick slices fresh pineapple, quartered
4 large strawberries

APRICOT WINE GLAZE
45ml / 3tbls apricot jam
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine

SERVES 4

1 Prepare the glaze: in a medium bowl, combine all the ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes; stir well.

Marinated Lamb Kebabs

2 Add the prepared fruits to the glaze and leave to marinate for 10-15 minutes or for several hours, if preferred.
3 Thread the fruits, except the strawberries, onto 4 wooden or bamboo skewers. Place kebabs on a roasting rack, cover with greaseproof paper, and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, basting the fruit with the glaze and rearranging kebabs every 2 minutes. Add the strawberries for the last 2 minutes of cooking time. Serve hot with pouring cream or yoghurt, if preferred.

VARIATION
Substitute the following Honey-spice Glaze for the Apricot Wine Glaze. In a medium bowl, combine 45ml / 3tbls clear honey, 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice and 5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon. Do not heat, simply pour over the prepared fruits and proceed with the cooking instructions given left. Serve hot with cream or yoghurt.

Saucy fish kebabs

7¾ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb fresh cod or haddock fillets, skinned
30ml / 2tbls fine, dried breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil

BUTTER-CAPER SAUCE
30ml / 2tbls capers
1 small garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
large pinch mustard powder (optional)
75g / 3oz butter

GARNISH
lemon wedges
parsley sprigs

SERVES 4

How to microwave Saucy fish kebabs

Cut *the fish fillets lengthways into 2.5cm / 1in-wide strips. Place the breadcrumbs, salt, pepper and basil in a shallow dish and coat the fish strips evenly with the mixture, patting them thoroughly to stick.*

Using *four bamboo skewers, thread a quarter of the fish strips on to each skewer, folding and threading the fish at 7.5cm / 3in intervals, accordion-style. Arrange the kebabs on a microwave roasting rack.*

Cover *the fish kebabs with a sheet of greaseproof paper. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-8 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily with a fork, rearranging the kebabs twice during the cooking time.*

Cover *the fish loosely with greaseproof paper or foil. Stand for 2-3 minutes. To prepare the sauce, place the capers, garlic, salt, pepper, mustard and 15g / ½oz butter in a small bowl and mix thoroughly.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the garlic begins to brown, stirring once. Add remaining butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 45 seconds to 1¼ minutes; stir well.*

Place *fish on a serving plate and remove the skewers by twisting and pulling them out carefully. Spoon the sauce over the fish and serve hot, garnished with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs.*

Frozen convenience foods

Ready-made frozen meals are an invaluable stand-by when imagination and energy fail. Using the microwave they can be ready to eat in under half the time it takes with a conventional oven.

A stock of frozen meals in your freezer is a tremendous convenience. You can forget about food preparation, all you have to do is thaw and reheat. Doing this in a conventional oven, however, is not necessarily very quick. It may take 10-20 minutes to preheat the oven, and then anything from 20-40 minutes to heat the food. So in many cases it will take you a whole hour to get your 'convenience' meal on the table.

The microwave does away with all that time-wasting — and it saves on electricity. A typical meal for two, packed in a plastic tray, can be out of the freezer and on the table inside 20 minutes. If the food is packaged in foil, you will need to turn it out into a microwave-safe dish first. Cover the food with greaseproof paper, a lid or cling film rolled back at one edge, and microwave until heated through. Stirring or rearranging once or twice during microwaving helps to distribute the heat more evenly.

If you want to make up your own meal from a range of various frozen foods — for example fish fingers, oven chips and frozen peas — it takes a little more skill and thought. But you can still do it all by microwave and have everything ready to serve at the same time. The secret is to get used to cooking individual items first. Then, once this is mastered, it becomes easier to combine foods and assemble a complete meal by making use of microwave standing and holding times.

Jam Roly Poly

RAY DUNS

Frozen bread and rolls

Fresh warm bread and rolls are treats few can resist, and a slice of good, fresh-tasting bread is also an excellent accompaniment to a quick meal. With the microwave, even if you have forgotten to take bread out of the freezer ahead, you can still have warmed rolls or slices with your meal in a matter of seconds.

Bread contains a great deal of moisture, so when thawing, wrap it in absorbent paper to prevent the surface becoming soggy. Microwave for just a few seconds, until slightly warm. When thawing rolls, arrange them on a thick layer of absorbent paper to keep the crust crisp. Put them in a serving basket first if you like, provided it is microwave-safe.

How to thaw bread slices and rolls

Wrap *a frozen slice of bread in absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 seconds or until warm to touch. Let stand 5 minutes. Allow 20-30 seconds for 2 slices of bread. Standing time is the same.*

Place *a frozen roll on absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds or until hot; let stand 5 minutes. Allow 45-60 seconds at 100% (High) to warm 2 rolls. Standing time is the same.*

Potato-topped pies

11 mins

Standing time: none

Frozen products, particularly pies, are often packaged in foil containers. In which case the first thing to remember is to remove the contents from the foil container and place in a similar-sized casserole. Cover with cling film and roll back at one edge.

454g / 1lb fish or meat potato-topped pie

SERVES 2

How to microwave Potato-topped pies

Transfer *the pie from the foil tray to a casserole if necessary, and cover with cling film. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-10 minutes.*

Increase *power to 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the pie is hot, turning the dish once. Place under a hot grill to brown the top, if wished.*

Meat meals-in--bags

4 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Meat frozen in a sauce is pre-cooked before freezing. The dish, therefore, only needs time to thaw out and reheat. In the microwave there is no need for boiling water, just pierce the bag, place on a plate in the cooker, and microwave as directed, right.

225g / 8oz frozen cook-in-the-bag gravy and roast chicken or beef

SERVES 2

How to microwave Meat meals-in-the-bag

Place *the frozen cook-in-bag on a plate and make a cut in the top of the bag. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until well heated.*

Leave *to stand for 2 minutes to complete heating through to the centre. Shake the bag gently, snip off the end and divide the food between 2 plates.*

Fish in sauce

5 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

The first standing time allows the fish to thaw before cooking.

175g / 6oz frozen cook-in-bag cod or plaice in sauce

SERVES 1

1 Place the cook-in-bag on a plate and make a cut in the bag. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes.
2 Microwave a further 3-4 minutes, or until the fish is cooked. Snip off the end of the bag and serve on the hot plate.

VARIATION
Fish-in-sauce for two: Microwave at 100% (High) 3½ minutes; stand for 2 minutes. Microwave a further 5-6 minutes until cooked.

Fish fingers, chips and peas

6 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

vegetable oil for greasing
100g / 4oz frozen chips
3 frozen fish fingers
50g / 2oz frozen peas
15g / ½oz butter
salt and pepper

SERVES 1

1 To microwave follow step-by-step instructions, right.

VARIATION
Fish fingers, chips and peas for two: Double ingredients. Microwave the peas and butter at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Let stand, covered. Microwave the fish fingers on a dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, turning once. Set aside. Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; grease lightly. Spread the chips evenly; cover. Microwave for 5 minutes, rearranging once. To serve, drain and season peas. Arrange all ingredients on 2 plates and microwave each at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.

How to microwave Fish fingers, chips and peas

Preheat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; grease lightly. Spread out the chips and fish fingers evenly. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, turn over once. Let stand, covered, for 4 minutes.*

Cover *and microwave peas and half the butter in a bowl at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; stir once. Stand for 2 minutes. Arrange the fish fingers and chips on a plate. Drain the peas, season and add remaining butter.*

How to microwave frozen pancakes

Microwave crispy pancakes in a browning dish and plain crêpes on a plate. Crêpes with sauce need microwaving separately before heating together.

Crispy pancakes

5 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz packet crispy pancakes with chicken and bacon
vegetable oil for greasing

SERVES 4

1 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions and grease lightly.
2 Add the pancakes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; turn once. Let stand for 5 minutes.

Savoury crêpes

6½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz packet frozen Swiss cheese crêpes with ham

SERVES 2

1 Place the pancakes on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Savoury crêpes in a sauce

9¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

241g / 8½oz packet frozen chicken crêpes with sauce

SERVES 2

1 Place the bag of sauce on a plate and pierce the bag. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.
2 Cook the crêpes on a plate at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6 minutes.
3 Pour sauce over crêpes; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Frozen desserts

Many frozen desserts are delicate so watch carefully during thawing. It is often best to remove the wrapping and place the dessert on a serving plate before thawing. If the dessert is to be served cold, microwave only until just thawed so that a cocktail stick can be inserted without resistance. If icing starts to run, stop microwaving and leave the dessert to stand until thawed. If the dessert is to be served hot, thaw at 20-30% (Defrost), then heat through.

How to thaw a cream gâteau

Remove *15cm / 6in gâteau from the packaging to a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) 1 minute. Check cream and microwave another 15-30 seconds, watching closely. Let stand 20 minutes.*

Gâteau slices *can be thawed individually. Microwave 1 slice at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Let stand for 10 minutes so the slice thaws completely and is ready to eat.*

How to thaw and heat Jam roly poly

Remove *the jam roly poly from the foil container and transfer to a plate. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes.*

Increase *power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for another 4 minutes. Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then serve with hot custard.*

Sweet crêpes in a sauce

3 mins

Standing time: none

200g / 7.05oz packet frozen Crêpes Suzette
15g / ½oz unsalted butter

SERVES 4

1 Place the bag of sauce on a plate and pierce the bag. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.
2 Melt the butter in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Add pancakes and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, turning once.
3 Pour on the sauce, turning the pancakes to coat. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.

Turkey pieces

Cranberry-pineapple turkey drumsticks or rolled turkey breast with ham and cheese are just two of the tasty recipes made with ease in your microwave using this economical meat.

Turkey drumsticks and boneless breast portions can be cooked quickly and remarkably easily in the microwave. Don't just save this tasty, versatile meat for special occasions. These useful meal-sized portions make great mid-week suppers and with a little dressing up with a sauce or a coating, make elegant meals too.

Turkey drumsticks and breast portions should be available, chilled or frozen from most good supermarkets or butchers. They are good value, so are well worth shopping around for. Turkey drumsticks are large and meaty, so one portion is normally ample for two servings. Turkey breasts come in anything from 75-225g / 3-8oz , which will make one or two servings according to size (allow about 100g / 4oz per person).

Turkey breasts or fillets come ready skinned and boned and are a boon for everyday and entertaining, since they are so simple and versatile. They are delicious roasted — brushed with melted butter and a sauce of your choice, or they can be rolled, coated or casseroled to make a whole range of mouthwatering dishes.

Drumsticks also are popular and tasty roasted in the microwave. Use a soy or Worcestershire sauce browning mixture to give them a more appealing finish.

Stand turkey breasts for 2 minutes and drumsticks for 5 minutes to complete cooking and further tenderize the meat.

Individual Turkey Rolls

Individual turkey rolls

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 thin slices cooked ham
4 slices processed cheese
4 turkey breasts, 75g-100g / 3-4oz each, beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thickness
2.5ml / ½tsp dried parsley or 5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Trim the ham and cheese to fit turkey breasts. Place one slice of ham and cheese on each breast.
2 Starting at the narrow end, roll up each breast and secure with a wooden cocktail stick.
3 Arrange, seam up, in a 20cm / 8in square dish. Cover with greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes. Turn rolls over and sprinkle with parsley. Re-cover and microwave for 5-6 minutes or until the turkey is no longer pink. Stand for 5 minutes.

Cook's notes

Beat out turkey breasts to a thin, even thickness so that this delicate cut of poultry cooks quickly and retains its moisture.

Place breasts between two sheets of cling film or greaseproof paper, dampening the paper first so that it does not stick to the meat. Then use a meat bat or rolling pin to beat out the meat.

How to microwave turkey breasts

Place *each turkey breast between two sheets of cling film or dampened greaseproof paper and beat out to an even 6mm / ¼in thickness with a rolling pin or meat bat.*

Combine *15ml / 1tbls each of melted butter and Worcestershire sauce and brush half over the meat. Place in dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) (see chart on page 399 for timings).*

Turn *breasts over halfway through cooking and brush with remaining sauce mixture. Cook for remaining time until flesh is white and juices run clear. Stand for 2 minutes.*

How to microwave turkey drumsticks

Place *turkey drumsticks on a rack, with the meaty parts downwards. Mix together 15ml / 1tbls each oil and soy sauce and brush half the mixture over turkey joints.*

Cover *with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 or 8 minutes (see chart on page 399). Reduce to 50% (Medium) and cook for remaining first half of cooking time.*

Turn *the drumsticks over, with meatiest parts placed to the outside. Brush with remaining coating and cook for the rest of the time until the juices run clear. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Creamed turkey

18½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz plain flour
salt and pepper
250ml / 9fl oz milk
4 bacon rashers, chopped
450g / 1lb turkey breasts, cut into thin strips
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
100g / 4oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Melt the butter in a large covered jug at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in flour and seasonings and blend in milk.
2 Microwave for 3-4 minutes or until thickened, whisking every minute. Set aside.
3 Microwave bacon in a large covered casserole at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until crisp. Drain away surplus fat.
4 Add turkey, white sauce, garlic and basil to casserole. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes, until turkey is no longer pink, stirring twice.
5 Add cheese, cover and stand for 5 minutes. Serve with tagliatelle, cooked conventionally.

Cranberry turkey drumsticks

33¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz cranberry sauce
225g / 8oz can crushed pineapple, drained
10ml / 2tsp finely grated orange zest
10 drops red food colouring
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
4 turkey drumsticks, about 350g-400g / 12-14oz each

SERVES 4-6

1 In a bowl combine the cranberry sauce, pineapple, orange zest and food colouring.
2 In a small, covered bowl, melt the butter at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in Worcestershire sauce.
3 Place drumsticks on a microwave roasting rack with the meatiest parts upwards and brush with half of both the butter and cranberry mixture. Cover with greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for the first 8 minutes of cooking time, then reduce to 50% (Medium) and cook for 25-31 minutes (as calculated in chart left) until juices run clear.
5 Halfway through, turn over and brush with remaining butter and cranberry mixture. Re-cover.
6 Stand, covered with foil, for 5 minutes. Serve whole, or carve meat into slices.

Cranberry Turkey Drumsticks

Microwave times for turkey portions

TURKEY PORTION	QUANTITY	START AT 100% (HIGH)	TOTAL COOKING TIME PER 450g / 1lb FINISHING AT 50% (MEDIUM)
Drumsticks	2	5 mins	11-13 mins per lb
	4	8 mins	11-13 mins per lb
Breasts	2	none	8-10 mins per lb
	4	none	8-10 mins per lb

Turkey divan

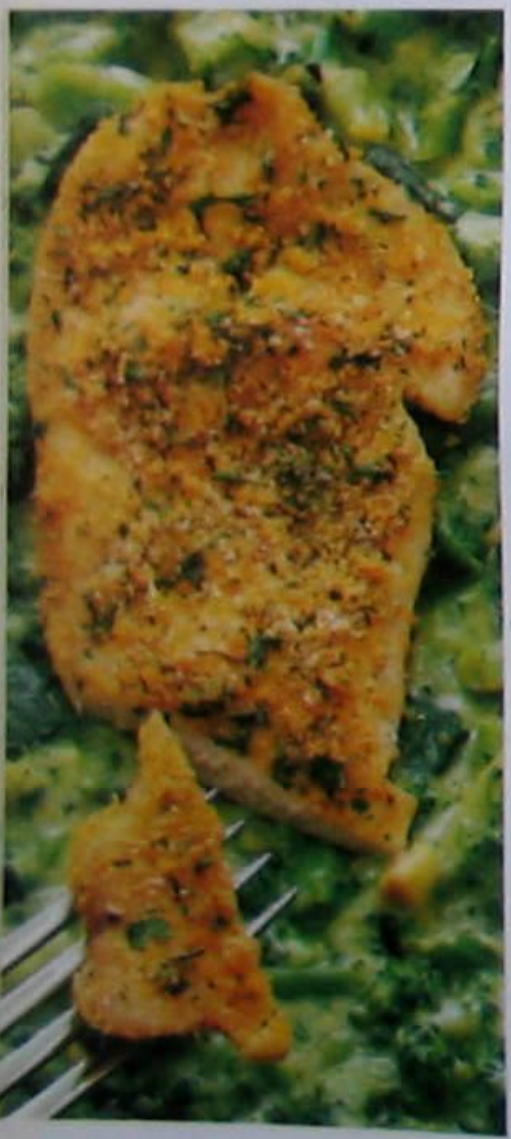
15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

250g / 9oz pkt frozen broccoli
290g / 10.6oz can cream of chicken soup
30ml / 2tbls sherry
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
4 turkey breasts, about 100g / 4oz each, beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thickness
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese
45ml / 3tbls cornflake crumbs
10ml / 2tsp dried parsley

SERVES 4

1 Microwave broccoli in the packet at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thawed. Drain well and chop.



2 Combine the broccoli, chicken soup, sherry and salt in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish, spreading the mixture over the base. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes.
3 Stir and then top with turkey breasts. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes until meat juices run clear, turning turkey halfway through cooking.
4 Combine the cheese, crumbs and parsley in a small mixing bowl and sprinkle evenly over the turkey breasts.
5 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until cheese melts. Stand for 5 minutes.

Vegetable braised turkey

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 turkey drumsticks, about 250g / 9oz each
1 large tomato, coarsely chopped
1 large onion, sliced and separated into rings
1 large green pepper, cut into thin strips
1 chicken stock cube
65ml / 2½fl oz hot water
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt, optional
2.5ml / ½tsp red wine vinegar

SERVES 4

1 Skin and bone turkey drumsticks and cut meat into 2.5cm / 1in cubes. A 250g / 9oz drumstick yields approximately 150g / 5oz meat.
2 Combine the tomato, onion rings and pepper strips in a 20cm / 8in square dish.
3 Arrange turkey meat over the vegetables.
4 Combine the remaining ingredients and pour over the turkey and vegetables. Cover.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Rotate the dish and rearrange turkey pieces. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-24 minutes or until the meat is no longer pink and juices run clear, rotating the dish twice during cooking.
6 Stand for 5 minutes.

Orange turkey drumsticks

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 turkey drumsticks, weighing about 450-500g / 16-18oz each, skinned
onion salt
pepper
75ml / 3fl oz orange juice
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
25ml / ½tsp ground coriander

SAUCE
125ml / 4fl oz orange juice
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp cornflour

SERVES 4

1 Sprinkle both sides of drumsticks with a little onion salt and pepper. Arrange, bone side up, in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.
2 Combine orange juice, soy sauce, orange zest and coriander. Pour over turkey. Cover with greaseproof paper.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 17-21 minutes (according to chart page 399) until juices run clear.
4 Halfway through cooking, turn drumsticks over, basting with sauce. Re-cover.
5 When cooked, remove from dish and cover loosely with foil. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.
6 Mix together the sauce ingredients. Stir into meat juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until sauce thickens slightly.
7 Cut the meat from the bone and serve with the sauce poured over or served separately.

Orange Turkey Drumsticks

DAVE KING

Honey-glazed drumsticks

45 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

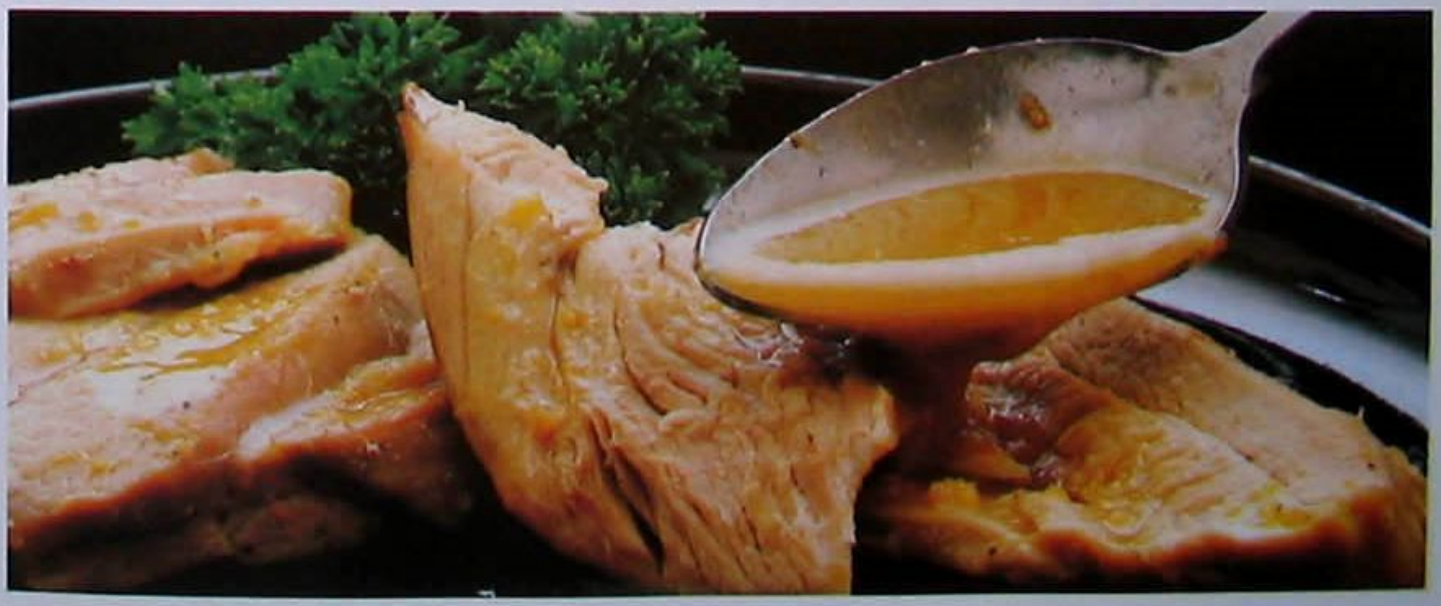
4 turkey drumsticks, about 450-700g / 1lb-1½lb each

GLAZE
125ml / 4fl oz honey
grated zest of 1 lemon
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
1.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine the glaze ingredients in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until warm.
2 Place turkey on rack, meaty part down. Brush with half glaze.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for the first 8 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for 36-46 minutes (see chart, page 399).
4 Turn drumsticks over once and brush with remaining glaze. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes, then carve meat from the bone and serve.

Honey-glazed drumsticks



Bouillabaisse

This famous fish stew, a speciality of the Mediterranean region of France, makes a temptingly-different dinner party dish that is simple to prepare and cooks to perfection in the microwave.

Bouillabaisse is a mouth-watering combination of seafood in a rich and flavourful sauce of onion, tomato, saffron and white wine. Serve it piping hot, garnished with chopped parsley and accompanied by crusty French bread and a carafe of chilled dry white wine.

Fish cooks very successfully in the microwave, retaining all its delicate flavour and moisture. However, because the types of fish included in this dish vary in thickness and density — lobster tails being more dense than the pieces of halibut, for example — it is important to follow the timings given, as fish can spoil easily if overcooked. To ensure even cooking, keep the portions of seafood as uniform in size as possible, alternatively, place any thicker portions (such as the lobster tails) near the edge of the dish, and the smaller, less dense prawns and halibut pieces in the centre where they will receive less energy. It is also important to remove the Bouillabaisse from the microwave when almost cooked and let it stand for 5 minutes to complete cooking.

A more economical version can be made using cod to replace the halibut and extra prawns in place of the lobster tails. The saffron strands can be replaced with less expensive ground saffron.

Bouillabaisse

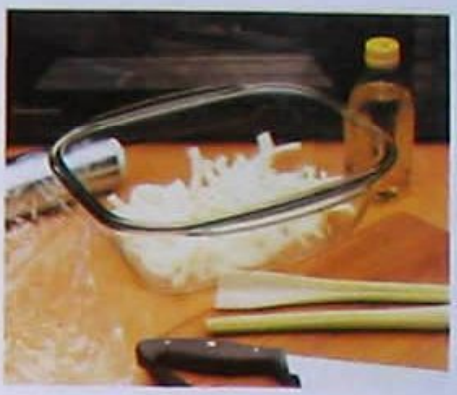
35 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, thinly sliced
1-2 celery stalks, chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
425ml / ¾pt hot water
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
½ small orange, thinly sliced
2 slices of lemon
1 garlic clove, crushed
20g / ¾oz butter or margarine
5ml / 1tsp sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried mixed herbs
1.5ml / ¼tsp cayenne pepper
2 large pinches saffron strands
225g / 8oz halibut or haddock, skinned and boned
2 small lobster tails
225g / 8oz unpeeled prawns
4 frozen scallops, thawed

SERVES 4

How to microwave Bouillabaisse



Combine *the sliced onion, chopped celery and olive oil in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover with a lid or cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring the mixture twice during microwaving to ensure even cooking.*

Stir *in the remaining ingredients except the fish and seafood. Re-cover with a lid or cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes until the flavours are thoroughly blended and the mixture is slightly thickened. Stir twice during the cooking.*

Cut *the halibut or haddock into 5-7.5cm / 2-3in pieces. Cut the lobster tails in half lengthways, leaving shells on. (If preferred, remove flesh from shells and cut into bite-sized pieces.) Peel and de-vein prawns, leaving tail shells on. Cut scallops in half or into quarters if large.*

Arrange *the fish and seafood in the dish with the larger more dense portions to the outside. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes or until fish flakes easily and seafood is opaque, stirring once. Stand for 5 minutes. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve hot.*

Creamy flans

Microwave a flan case . . . and a whole range of irresistible creamy desserts is at your fingertips. If you add store-cupboard ingredients for the fillings you can make delicious flans at a moment's notice.

Microwaving lends itself very happily to preparing smooth, creamy pie fillings. Indeed, packet dessert mixes and store-cupboard ingredients which are readily to hand, make cream flans a great choice as an emergency dessert, as well as an any-occasion favourite.

It is easy to microwave flan cases, using either pastry, (page 370), or biscuit crumbs, (page 32).

Fillings are not only quick to prepare, they are easy and convenient, with little danger of sticking or burning. All the attention they need is occasional stirring.

The meringue mixture is an ideal finishing touch — microwaving produces light meringue toppings, but they lack colour. To make them more attractive, sprinkle fine biscuit crumbs over the top before microwaving, or brown under a hot grill.

Creamy Lemon Cheese Flan

DAVE KING

Do

- Assemble cream-filled flans in stages, cooking each layer as it is added: microwave the filling in a cooked case, then add meringue or a topping.
- Keep a supply of frozen flan cases in the freezer for use in an emergency.
- Keep a stock of condensed milk, nuts, marshmallows, pudding mixes, dry fruit and spices for last-minute desserts.

Don't

- Attempt to cook the flan case with the filling in it — the moisture of the filling will make the pastry soggy and prevent it from cooking.
- Add all the liquid for the fillings at once. Add a little of the liquid at a time to ensure smooth mixing and no lumps, beating the mixture well between additions of liquid.
- Cook a creamy filling and a meringue topping together or the meringue will over-cook before the filling underneath is set. It is important that the filling is cooked first before a meringue topping is added.

Basic cream flan

15 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz sugar
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour
pinch of salt
500ml / 18fl oz milk
4 egg yolks, beaten
25g / 1oz butter (optional)
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
1 cooked 23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)

MERINGUE
3 egg whites
1.5ml / ¼tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp cream of tartar
90ml / 6tbls caster sugar

MAKES A 23cm / 9in FLAN

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt casserole or jug, combine the sugar, cornflour, flour and salt.
2 Gradually stir in the milk, then microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until thick, stirring every minute.
3 Stir about 120ml / 8tbls of the mixture into the yolks. Pour this into the mixture in the casserole, stirring well.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until thick.
5 Stir in the butter if using. Cool slightly, then stir in vanilla. Pour the filling into the pastry case and spread evenly.
6 To make the meringue, whisk the egg whites with the cornflour and cream of tartar until standing in soft peaks. Add the sugar, a spoonful at a time, whisking until glossy and stiff enough to stand in peaks. Spread over the pie, up to the crust. (If liked, sprinkle the top with some crushed biscuit crumbs for colour).
7 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-6 minutes until set, giving a ½ turn after 2 minutes.

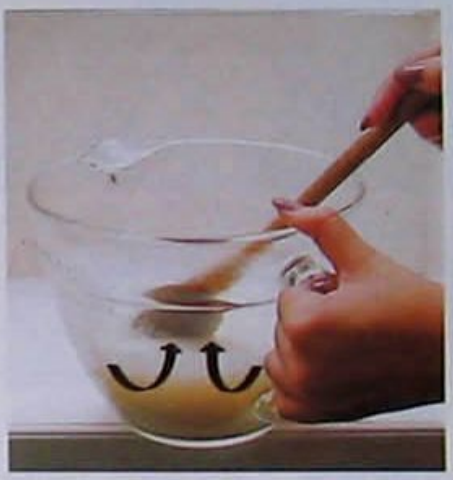
Cook's notes

If preferred, omit the meringue and chill the filled flan. Top with whipped cream just before serving.

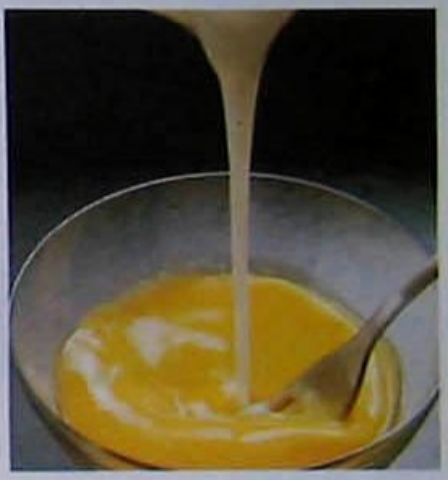
How to microwave cream flans

Combine *the dry filling ingredients before adding any liquid, which should be added gradually.*

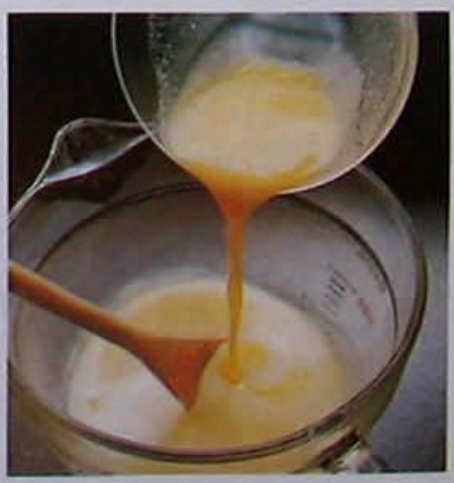
Stir *in the milk to make a smooth mixture, starting with about 60ml / 4tbls, then stirring in the rest.*



Microwave *at 100% (High) until the mixture starts to boil, then stir every minute until very thick.*

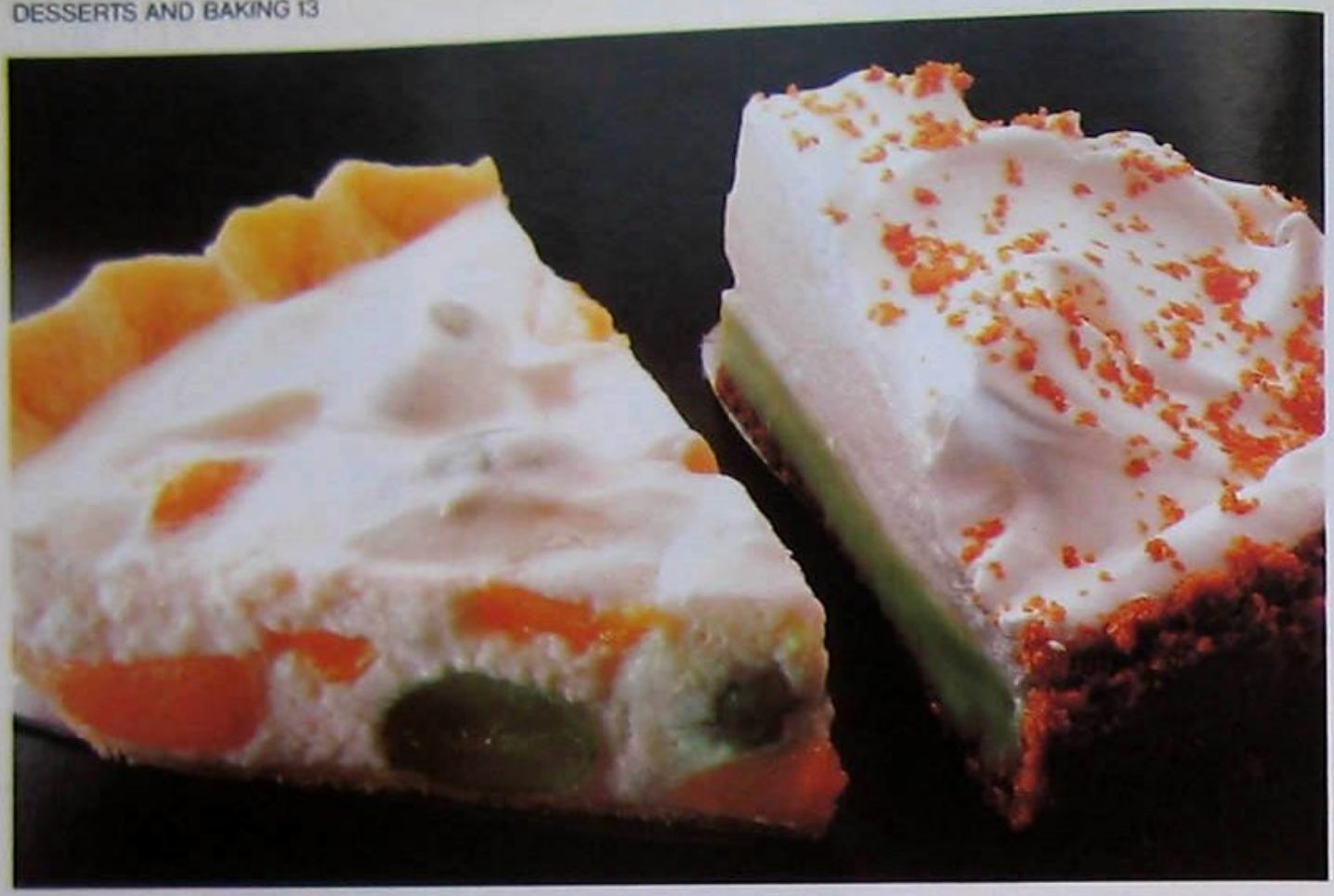


Add *a little of the hot mixture to the beaten egg yolks to prevent the egg from cooking in lumps.*



Stir *the blended yolks into the milk mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until boiling.*

Pour *the filling into the pastry case and add a topping such as whipped cream if liked (see above).*



Chantilly fruit flan

6 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz marshmallows, quartered
75ml / 3fl oz milk
350-450g / 12-16oz sliced fresh fruit or berries
175ml / 6fl oz whipping cream
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1 cooked 23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)

MAKES A 23cm / 9in FLAN

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt casserole, combine the marshmallows and milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until the marshmallows are melted, stirring every minute.
2 Stir until smooth and leave to stand until thick but not set. Fold in the fruit.
3 Whip the cream, sugar, vanilla and nutmeg until stiff.
4 Fold into the marshmallow mixture; spoon into the pastry case. Chill well before serving.

Key lime pie

12 mins

Standing time: none

400g / 14oz can sweetened condensed milk
3 egg yolks
grated zest of 1 lime
125ml / 4fl oz mixed lime and lemon juice (or lime only)
2-3 drops green colouring (optional)
1 cooked 23cm / 9in biscuit crumb case (see page 32)
Meringue Topping (see Basic Cream Flan)

MAKES A 23cm / 9in PIE

1 Blend the condensed milk and egg yolks with a mixer at low speed. Add the zest, juice and colouring and beat until smooth.
2 Pour the filling into the cooked crumb case and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-8 minutes until almost set in the centre, giving a ¼ turn every 3 minutes.
3 Prepare and microwave the meringue as directed on page 405. Chill before serving.

Left: *Chantilly Fruit Flan*
Right: *Key Lime Pie*

Creamy lemon cheese flan

17½ mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz cream cheese
3 eggs
75g / 3oz caster sugar
grated zest of 1 small lemon
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls milk
1 microwaved 23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)
crystallized lemon slices
pieces of angelica

MAKES A 23cm / 9in FLAN

1 Microwave the cream cheese in a bowl at 50% (Medium) for 30-45 seconds. Beat until fluffy. Beat in eggs, sugar, zest, juice and milk.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. Spoon into cooked case.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, giving a ¼ turn every 3 minutes. Chill. Decorate with lemon slices and angelica.

Soured cream raisin flan

13 mins

Standing time: none

This flan has a pleasantly spiced flavour which complements the slightly sharp taste of the soured cream.

175g / 6oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
pinch of ground cloves
100g / 4oz raisins
225ml / 8fl oz soured cream
125ml / 4fl oz milk
3 egg yolks
1 cooked 23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)
Meringue Topping (see Basic Cream Flan)

MAKES A 23cm / 9in FLAN

1 In a 1.1L / 2pt mixing bowl, combine the sugar, flour, cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, cloves and raisins. Gradually mix in the soured cream, then stir in milk and egg yolks; beat well until smooth.
2 Microwave the filling at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until very thick, stirring after 2 minutes, then at 1 minute intervals.
3 Beat the filling until smooth, then spoon into the cooked pastry case. Cool slightly.
4 Prepare the meringue according to the Basic Cream Flan recipe (page 405).
5 Spread the meringue over the filling, right to the pastry.
6 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-6 minutes until set, giving a ½ turn after 2 minutes.
7 Serve the flan hot or warm. Best made and eaten the same day.

Microtips

If a browned meringue is wanted, microwave for a further 2 minutes to make the meringue firm, then place under a hot grill for 2 minutes, watching closely to ensure that it does not start to burn on top.

Fruit-glazed cream flan

14 mins

Standing time: none

Other frozen fruit such as raspberries or blackcurrants could be used for the topping.

31g / 1¼oz packet vanilla * blancmange mixture
30ml / 2tbls sugar
500ml / 18fl oz milk
1 cooked 23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)

TOPPING
275g / 10oz frozen strawberries, thawed with juice drained and reserved
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice

MAKES A 23cm / 9in FLAN

Above: *Soured Cream Raisin Flan*
Below: *Fruit-glazed Cream Flan*

1 Mix the blancmange powder and sugar in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Stir in about 60ml / 4tbls of milk until smooth. Stir in remaining milk.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, until the mixture boils, stirring after 2 minutes, then every minute. Pour into the cooked pastry case, cool, then chill.
3 In a small bowl, combine the strawberry juice and cornflour. Stir in the strawberries. Microwave for 4-5 minutes until thickened and clear, stirring every minute. Stir in lemon juice and mix well.
4 Cool for 10 minutes, then spoon the topping over the filling. Chill before serving.

*Use 45ml / 15tsp cornflour and a few drops vanilla flavouring in Australia and New Zealand.

Courgettes

Simplicity and speed are the advantages of cooking courgettes in the microwave. They come out tasting just as tender and flavourful as if they had been steamed over a gentle heat.

Courgettes are most readily available during the summer months. They are really baby marrows, harvested before they have had a chance to grow into the larger vegetable.

When buying, select courgettes that are straight, firm and heavy for their size. Avoid those that are slightly soft to the touch or have dull, yellowing skins.

Courgettes are often steamed and eaten on their own or combined with other vegetables for colourful accompaniments. Cooked in the microwave in a little butter they lose none of their delicate flavour. They are excellent with tomatoes, see Italian Courgettes, page 410, or aubergine, see Ratatouille, page 409. As with so many vegetables, keep an eye on timing during cooking, and remove as soon as the courgettes reach the desired tenderness.

Store courgettes in a plastic bag, secured with a plastic or metal tie and place in the bottom of the refrigerator. Eat within a few days of purchase.

Left: *Ratatouille*
Right: *Courgette Gratin*

How to microwave courgettes

Wash *225g / 8oz courgettes in cold water. Trim the ends and cut into 6mm / ¼in slices. Do not slice them in advance as the flesh quickly discolours.*

Place *in a shallow casserole together with 25g / 1oz butter for flavour. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge or a loose-fitting lid.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-6½ minutes, depending on desired tenderness; stir once. Let stand, covered, for 2-3 minutes; drain.*

PAUL WEBSTER

Ratatouille

9 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Ratatouille is often served as a starter, hot or cold, with warm French bread.

225g / 8oz aubergine, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, sliced and separated into rings
1 courgette, sliced
½ green pepper, cut into thin strips
1 celery stalk, sliced
3 large tomatoes, cut into wedges
1.5ml / ¼tsp chopped basil leaves
1.5ml / ¼tsp chopped oregano or marjoram
large pinch of thyme
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

SERVES 6

1 Combine all the ingredients except the Parmesan cheese in a casserole. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge or a loose-fitting lid.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes, or until the aubergines are translucent, stirring 2-3 times. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and serve hot or cold.

Courgette gratin

13 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb courgettes, cut into 12mm / ½in slices
½ onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
250ml / 9fl oz milk
2.5ml / ½tsp made mustard
pinch of grated nutmeg
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Emmental or Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls dry browned breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Put the courgettes in a shallow casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes; stir once. Let stand 2-3 minutes; drain.
2 Place the onion and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the onion is tender.
3 Blend in the flour, milk, mustard, nutmeg and seasoning to taste. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until bubbling all over; stir once. Mix in the cheese.
4 Pour the sauce over the courgettes. Sprinkle with the crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated through.

Italian courgettes

6 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb courgettes, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
½ green pepper, chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped basil
salt and pepper
2 tomatoes, peeled and cut into 12mm / ½in chunks

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients except the tomatoes in a casserole.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the courgettes are tender, but still crisp; stir once.
3 Stir in the tomatoes. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2½ minutes, or until the tomatoes are tender. Let stand for 2-3 minutes.

Left: *Italian Courgettes;*
Below: *Courgettes with Pimiento*

Courgette boats

9 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

4 courgettes, halved lengthways
1 bacon rasher, trimmed and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
90ml / 6tbls fresh brown breadcrumbs
1 egg yolk
1 tomato, chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Scoop out the flesh from the courgette halves using a teaspoon, and chop. Set the shells aside. Combine the chopped flesh with the bacon, onion and parsley in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once during the cooking time.
2 Stir in the breadcrumbs, egg yolk, tomato and seasoning. Spoon the mixture into the courgette shells, dividing it equally between them.
3 Place in a shallow dish and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, rearranging once. Let stand for 3-4 minutes. Decorate with tomato wedges and sprigs of parsley, if wished.

Courgettes with pimiento

6 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb courgettes, thinly sliced
1 cap of canned pimiento, drained and diced.
1 small onion, chopped
1.5ml / ½tsp chopped basil leaves
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
15g / ½oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a casserole and cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until the courgettes are fork tender, stirring once. Let stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.

Microwave features

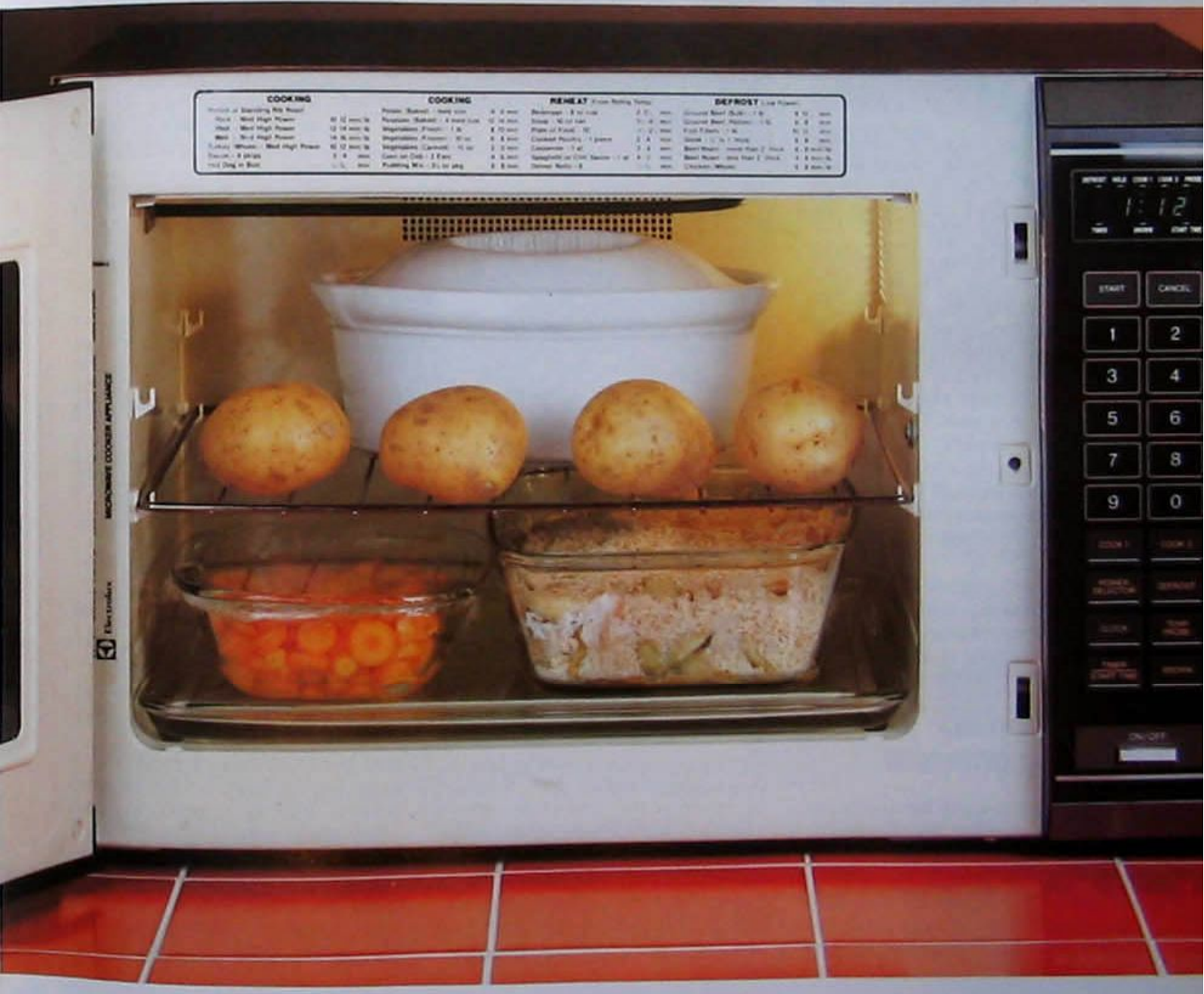
Do you own a microwave that you do not fully understand? Don't be daunted by technology. Learn about the special features of your cooker so you can use it to its best advantage.

As an increasingly popular form of 'new technology' cooking, there are now literally hundreds of different microwave models on the market. There are many different features within these models; and of course, your personal needs, will decide which features you feel to be essential.

Cooking evenly

When microwaves enter the cooker, they are reflected off the metal cooker walls to give a random pattern of energy waves. If food is exposed to this haphazard pattern of waves, it cooks unevenly. You can try to avoid this by stirring and rotating food frequently, but today, most microwave models contain either a turntable, a stirrer fan or rotating antenna which will help to solve the problem. A combination of these features is designed to be even more effective.

A shelf extends the available cooking space in this cooker *(see page 413)*



Turntables

A fitted turntable in the cooker (see right) will turn the food automatically and constantly through the microwaves, giving more even distribution of energy through the food. However, even with a turntable, there may be cold or cool spots in cooked dishes. Turning, rearranging, stirring and rotating instructions in recipes should, therefore, still be followed.

You can cook directly on the turntable if the food is dry and can be handled (like a jacket potato) or you can place the cooking dish on the turntable. If using a large dish, particularly if it is long or oval, make sure the turntable can turn freely without the dish catching the sides of the cooker. Place small dishes to one side of the turntable, not in the centre.

Take care to keep the turntable and the revolving mechanism clean. Food spillages will attract microwave energy away from the food you want to cook.

Some cookers have a mechanism that allows you to stop the turntable operating, or you can choose to cook large, awkwardly shaped food without the turntable in place; but don't do this unless your manufacturer's booklet specifically says you can, or you may damage the cooker. If you are allowed to use the cooker without the turntable, you will have to stop cooking frequently and turn the dish yourself so that the food will cook evenly.

The disadvantage of a turntable is that it takes up a great deal of space in the cooker cavity and anything you cook has to sit within the circle of the turntable.

MOULINEX

DON LAST

A rotating antenna (inset) is hidden under the floor of the cooker.

Stirrer fan or rotating antenna

A stirrer fan, usually located in the top of the cooker, or a rotating antenna, under the floor of the cooker do a similar job to the turntable. These devices distribute the microwaves evenly through the cooker and thus through the food, instead of turning the food through the waves. If your cooker has one of these mechanisms you can use a much larger proportion of the cooker space, you can cook in large square or oblong dishes, and awkward-shaped foods like a large leg of lamb or rib of beef present less of a problem than when you are cooking with a turntable. With these mechanisms you may still need to turn the food by hand occasionally, so check the manufacturer's instructions for your machine carefully.

Variable power

Variable power, like the temperatures of a conventional oven, allows for the fact that some foods are better cooked gently while others require quick cooking.

The simplest microwave models have only a Defrost and a Cook setting. Variable power offers a number of settings ranged between the very low and high settings. The settings may be called High, Medium, and Low; numbered; marked as percentages; or labelled Simmer, Roast and so on.

Variable power can be achieved in two ways. In one instance the power will be reduced to a constant level of wattage, varying according to the wattage of your machine: for instance, 50% (Medium) of a 700W machine will be generated at 350W. Alternatively, the same strength of power will be generated for a shorter time: 50% (Medium) in this case will be 700W generated in short bursts for 50% of the time.

Shelves

One of the problems of microwave cooking has always been the small capacity of the cooker — making it complicated to prepare a meal. A shelf in the cooker extends the available cooking space. However, *never* try to add a shelf if your model was not built with one: in those models which do contain them, the cooker and shelf have been specially designed in conjunction with the microwaves.

The positioning of food, with the shelf in place is important. The microwaves will reach food placed on the shelf first, which may then shield the food beneath — so place food needing the longest cooking time on the shelf. The power will be divided with roughly 60% of the power going to the shelf and 40% to the floor of the microwave, depending on the position of the shelf. Two dishes on the same level will take 50% of the power each. This division of power explains how you can put dishes which normally have such differing cooking times into the microwave for very similar lengths of time.

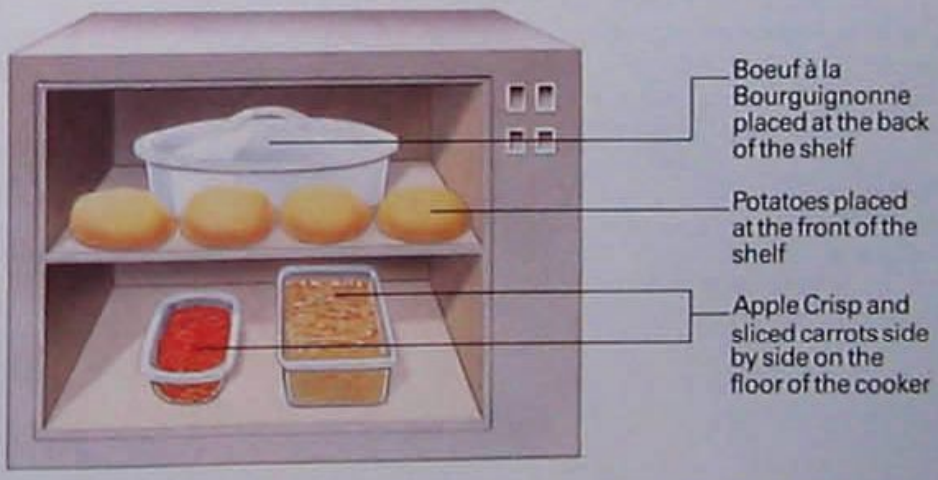
To estimate roughly the cooking time for a complete meal, first convert each individual recipe timing to 100% (High), halving the time, for instance, for a dish normally cooked at 50% (Medium). Add up these timings and this will give you a rough guide to the total cooking time.

Most complete meals are cooked at 100% (High) and in most cases the food will all be put into the microwave at the same time. However, food that cooks extremely quickly would be added towards the end of cooking. Similarly a large dish or one being cooked from frozen may be started earlier or left longer in the microwave.

Microwaving a complete meal using a cooker with a shelf

MENU

Boeuf à la Bourguignonne (see page 231)
4 potatoes, weighing 100-175g / 4-6oz each, scrubbed and pricked with a fork
350g / 12oz carrots, sliced (see chart, page 301 for procedure)
Apple Crisp (see page 87)


Boeuf à la Bourguignonne placed at the back of the shelf
Potatoes placed at the front of the shelf
Apple Crisp and sliced carrots side by side on the floor of the cooker

Arrange *all the food as shown in the diagram above. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 hour. Turn the potatoes over and rearrange and stir the carrots and Boeuf à la Bourguignonne twice during cooking. Remove the Boeuf à la Bourguignonne and leave to stand, covered, for 15 minutes. Remove the potatoes after 10 minutes, wrap in foil and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Remove and cover the carrots with foil to keep warm, or if they are not quite tender continue to microwave for 5 minutes. Serve the main course and leave the Apple Crisp in the microwave at 10% (Warm) until ready to serve.*

Supper for a crowd

After an afternoon out in the fresh air, the last thing you feel like doing is cooking. If you prepare all you can in advance, you can microwave the meal in minutes when you get home.

An afternoon out with friends need not mean that you have to face the chore of large-scale catering when you invite people home. It is no trouble to volunteer to be the host when you prepare ingredients, if not whole dishes, in advance, and then reheat or cook them in your microwave just before eating.

The main dish, Texas Chilli, certainly improves in flavour from standing overnight; all you need to do is reheat it in two batches — one can be served while the second is being heated.

The salad, dip and sauce ingredients can be measured and prepared in advance — indeed, salad ingredients will become crisper if washed in advance and stored in the refrigerator. Keep the items in separate polythene bags or sealed boxes and assemble the salad just before serving. Do not shred the lettuce until just before the meal, as the leaves are likely to brown at the edges. All the dip ingredients can be left ready to microwave when you get home. If not made in advance, it saves time to measure out the sauce ingredients ahead of time and microwave the sauce in between courses.

Cucumber cheese dip

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese, grated
125ml / 4fl oz single cream
3 pickled dill cucumbers, finely chopped

PAUL WEBSTER

MENU

Cucumber Cheese Dip
A tangy dip served hot with crisps

Texas Chilli
Beef in a spicy sauce with beans

Shredded Lettuce Salad
A filling layered salad with a creamy dressing

Mexican Sundaes
Ice cream with a special chocolate sauce

SERVES 8

SERVES 8

1 Place the onion and oil in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until the onion is tender. Stir in the remaining ingredients and cover.

2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 5-6 minutes, or until it is heated through and smooth, stirring every 2 minutes.

3 Serve the dip hot with a selection of crisps, corn chips and biscuits or chunks of assorted raw vegetables.

VARIATION

A low-fat Cheddar can be used instead of ordinary Cheddar.

Countdown

The day before

Microwave the Texas Chilli. After the standing time, allow to cool, then refrigerate until it is needed for reheating in batches.

Early on the day

Prepare the ingredients for the Shredded Lettuce Salad (but do not shred the lettuce or the edges will turn brown). Store separately in plastic bags in the refrigerator. Measure out the ingredients for the dip and dessert sauce so that they are ready to microwave when you need them.

When you get home

Microwave the dip and serve with crisps. Reheat the chilli in two batches; cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 15 minutes, stirring several times. Microwave the salad dressing and assemble the salad. Reheat the second bowl of chilli while the first is being served.

After the main course

Microwave the sauce for the Mexican Sundaes and serve over the ice cream.

Texas chilli

60 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

1.4kg / 3lb chuck steak
1 large onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
3 × 425g / 15oz cans tomatoes
350g / 12oz tomato purée
50g / 2oz bottled green chillies, drained and chopped
15-30ml / 1-2tbls chilli powder
7.5ml / 1½tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
3 × 425g / 15oz cans red kidney beans, drained

SERVES 8

1 Trim any excess fat from the meat and cut the lean into 12mm / ½in cubes. Combine the meat, onion, green pepper, garlic and oil in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole or bowl.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients except the beans. Cover with cling film or a lid and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 60 minutes, stirring several times during cooking.
3 Mix in the beans and leave to stand, covered, for 15 minutes.

Shredded lettuce salad

¾ min

Standing time: none

1 large crisp lettuce, shredded
6 tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
75g / 3oz black olives, stoned and sliced

DRESSING
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup
5ml / 2tsp lemon juice
275ml / ½pt natural yoghurt
salt and pepper

SERVES 8

1 On a large platter or in a bowl, layer the lettuce, tomatoes, onion and olives.
2 In a small bowl, mix the ketchup and lemon juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, until hot. Stir in yoghurt and seasoning. Serve with the salad.

Mexican sundaes

7 mins

Standing time: none

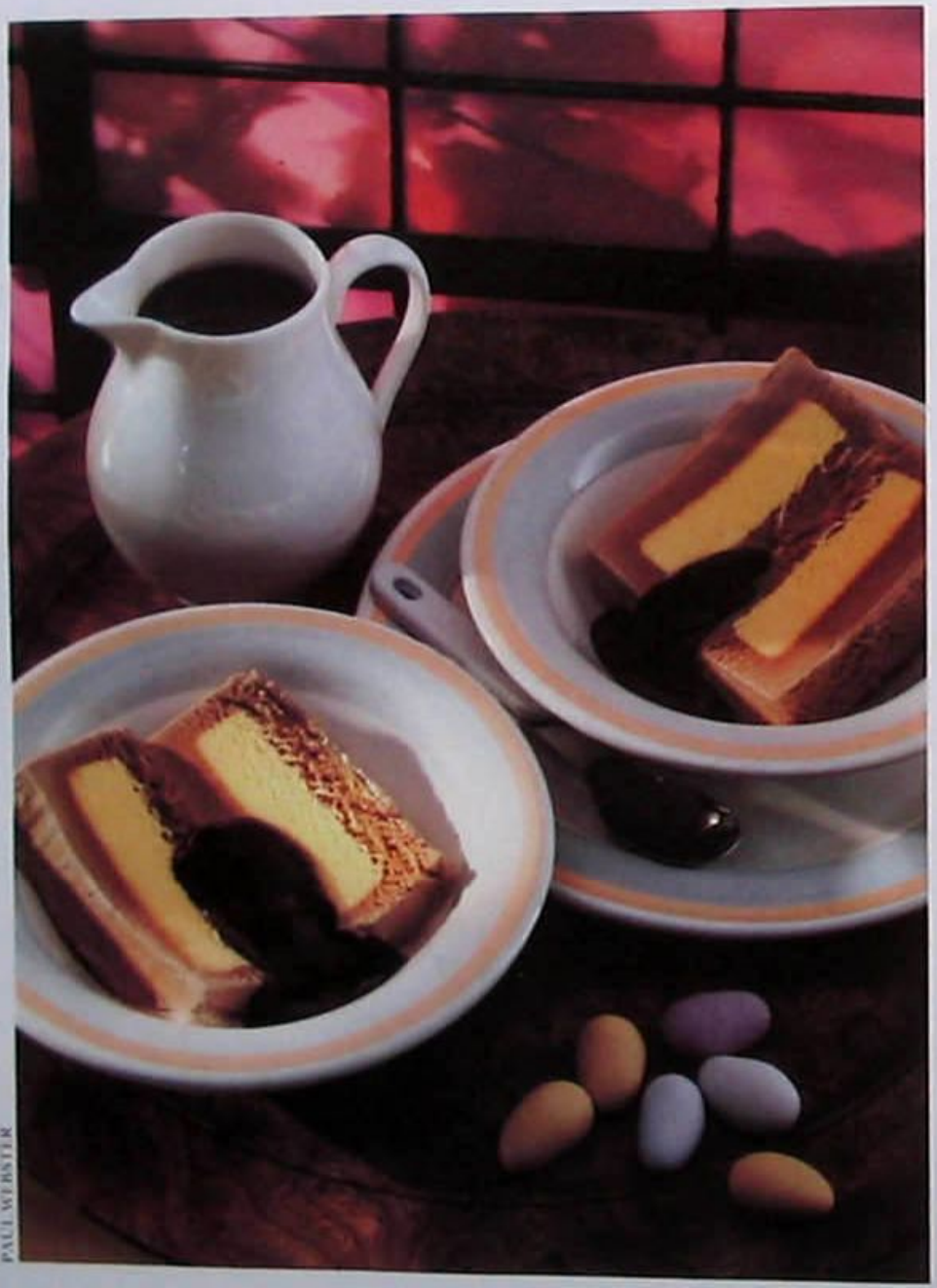
400g / 14oz sweetened condensed milk
175g / 6oz plain chocolate drops
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
1.4L / 2½pt flavoured ice cream (see Variation)

SERVES 8

1 Place the condensed milk in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes. The colour should start to change to a pale brown, at which point it will need no further cooking.
2 Add the chocolate drops, cinnamon and nutmeg and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to melt the chocolate. Stir well. Serve the ice cream into dishes. Spoon the hot sauce over the ice cream and serve at once.

VARIATION
Try ringing the changes by serving the sauce over hazelnut, toffee chip or banana and toffee ice cream.

Mexican Sundaes



PAUL WEBSTER

Reducing microwave recipes

What happens when a microwave recipe feeds four to six people and you only want to feed one or two? Follow the simple rules given here and see that reducing recipes is not difficult.

The speed of cooking and simplicity of preparation involved in microwaving makes it the ideal method of catering for one or two: For the retired couple or the career man or woman the convenience of popping a main dish into the microwave to be ready in a few minutes is tremendous.

However, most microwave recipes — like conventional ones — are designed for four to six people rather than for one or two; and as the microwave method is still new and unfamiliar to many people they are wary about attempting to convert recipes to serve fewer people.

But don't despair: there *are* golden rules and guidelines to follow, and the recipes here demonstrate how they work.

Bearing in mind that microwave cooking times are dependant on the weight and density of the food it is important that the cooking time is reduced when the quantity of food is decreased. Use the Guidelines chart, overleaf, and you will have the basis for reducing recipes successfully. Carefully experiment with favourite recipes, using the rules as a general guide.

Pork and Kidney Puddings

DON LAST

Guidelines for reducing microwave recipes

- *To halve the quantity of a recipe: halve the amount of each ingredient given. To make a recipe for four people serve one, quarter the ingredients.*
- *Choose a proportionately smaller cooking dish. The container should keep the layer of food at the same depth as in the original recipe. Make sure the dish is deep so that food will not boil over.*
- *When halving a recipe, microwave for roughly two-thirds of the original time. When quartering it, for a third of the time.*
- *Cover food as directed in the original recipe.*
- *Stir or turn food, or rearrange if necessary, as directed in the original recipe.*
- *Undercook rather than overcook. Start testing before the calculated time, especially if cooking delicate food such as fish or egg and cheese dishes.*
- *Watch factors which affect the timings, such as the starting temperature of the food (try to bring food to room temperature before cooking) or a high fat or sugar content which will give fast results.*
- *Leave to stand for a few minutes less than the standing time given in the original.*

Vegetables provençal for 4-6

20 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb cauliflower florets
450g / 1lb carrots, sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
45ml / 3tbls water
sliced, stoned black olives, to garnish

DRESSING
30ml / 2tbls wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls dry white wine
60ml / 4tbls corn oil
salt and pepper

1 Put the vegetables and water in a 2.3L / 4pt dish.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes, stirring gently 2-3 times during cooking.
3 Stand for 10 minutes; drain.
4 Combine all the ingredients for the dressing and beat with a fork until it emulsifies. Pour the dressing over the vegetables, garnish and serve hot, or chill, then garnish and serve.

Vegetables provençal for 2-4

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz cauliflower florets
225g / 8oz carrots, sliced
½ green pepper, seeded and sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
sliced, stoned black olives, to garnish

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
7.5ml / ½tbls dry white wine
30ml / 2tbls corn oil
salt and pepper

1 Put the vegetables and water in a 1.1L / 2pt dish.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stirring twice during microwaving.
3 Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then drain.
4 Combine all the ingredients for the dressing and beat with a fork until it emulsifies. Pour the dressing over the vegetables and serve hot, garnished with the olives or chill, then garnish and serve.

Vegetables provençal for 1-2

4 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz cauliflower florets
100g / 4oz carrots, sliced
¼ green pepper, seeded and sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
sliced, stoned black olives, to garnish

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
7.5ml / ½tbls corn oil
salt and pepper

1 Put the vegetables and water in a 575ml / 1pt dish.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once.
3 Allow to stand for 3 minutes, then drain.
4 Combine all the ingredients for the dressing and beat with a fork until it emulsifies. Pour the dressing over the vegetables and serve hot, garnished with the olives, or chill, then garnish and serve.

Layered mince casserole for 4-6

36 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

450g / 1lb minced beef
1 onion, chopped
300g / 10.6oz can vegetable soup
5ml / 1tsp beef extract (optional)
275g / 10oz frozen peas
700g / 1½lb cooked mashed potato
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley

1 Put the beef and onion into a 1.7L / 3pt casserole; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir with a fork and microwave for a further 2 minutes. Stir, then pour off excess fat and mix in the soup and beef extract.
2 Re-cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 13 minutes, stirring once. Stir at the end of cooking and set aside, covered.
3 Pierce the packet of peas and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Turn packet over, microwave for 3 minutes. Set aside.
4 Cover and microwave the mashed potato in a large mixing bowl at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.
5 Beat in 75g / 3oz of the grated cheese and the parsley.
6 Drain the peas and spread evenly over the meat mixture. Cover evenly with the potato. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.
7 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 10-15 minutes or until heated through, rotating the dish ¼ turn twice during cooking. Stand for 8 minutes.

Layered mince casserole for 2-3

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz minced beef
½ onion, chopped
½ × 300g / 10.6oz can vegetable soup
2.5ml / ½tsp beef extract (optional)
150g / 5oz frozen peas
350g / 12oz cooked mashed potato
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp dried parsley

1 Put the beef and onion into a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir with a fork and microwave for a further 1 minute. Stir, pour off excess fat and mix in the soup and beef extract.
2 Re-cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes. Stir and set aside, covered.
3 Put the peas into a 575ml / 1pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Set aside.
4 Cover and microwave the mashed potato in a large mixing bowl for 2½-3 minutes at 100% (High), stirring once.
5 Beat in 25g / 1oz of the grated cheese and the parsley.
6 Drain the peas and spread evenly over the meat mixture. Cover evenly with the potato. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese.
7 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes or until hot; rotate the dish ¼ turn, twice. Stand for 5 minutes.

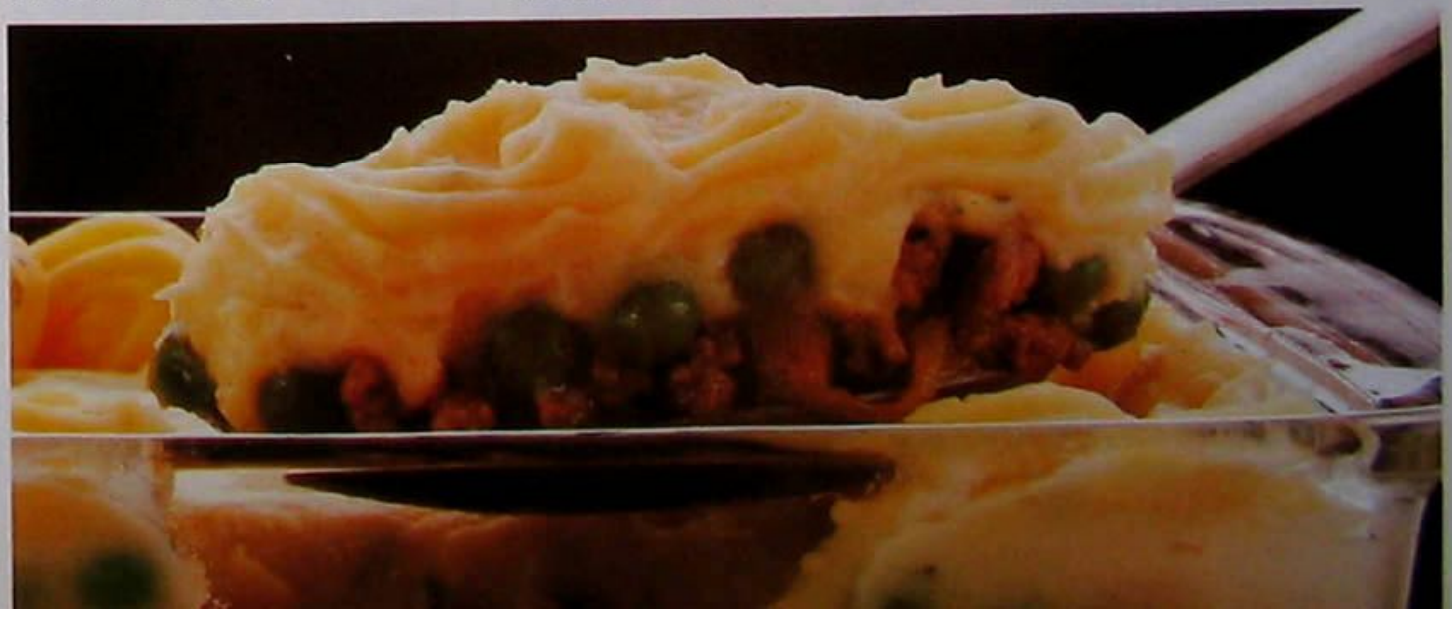
Layered mince casserole for 1-2

16 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz minced beef
1 small onion, chopped
¼ × 300g / 10.6oz can vegetable soup
1.5ml / ¼tsp beef extract (optional)
50g / 2oz frozen peas
175g / 6oz cooked mashed potato
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried parsley

1 Put the beef and onion into a 575-850ml / 1-1½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir and microwave for a further 30 seconds. Stir, pour off excess fat and mix in the soup and beef extract.
2 Re-cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5½ minutes, stirring after 2½ minutes. Stir and set aside, covered.
3 Put the peas into a small dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir once.
4 Cover and microwave the mashed potato for 2 minutes at 100% (High) in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Stir once.
5 Beat in 15ml / 1tbls of the grated cheese and the parsley.
6 Drain the peas and spread evenly over the meat mixture.
7 Pipe or spread the potato over the peas to cover. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese.
8 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes until hot. Rotate the dish ¼ turn, once. Stand for 3 minutes.



Pork and kidney puddings for 4

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls seasoned plain flour
450g / 1lb minced pork
4 lamb's kidneys, skinned, cored and sliced
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp corn oil
1 onion, finely chopped
300ml / 8fl oz boiling, well-flavoured stock
5ml / 1tsp dried dill
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
milk for brushing (optional)

SUET PASTRY*
225g / 8oz self raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
100g / 4oz shredded suet
150ml / 5fl oz water

1 Sprinkle the seasoned flour over the pork and kidneys.
2 Put the butter and oil in a 2.3-2.8L / 4-5pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir in the pork and kidneys with the onion.
3 Cover and microwave for 2 minutes. Stir carefully with a fork, breaking up any lumps. Microwave for 3 minutes.
4 Carefully stir in the boiling stock and the dill. Cover and microwave for 5-6 minutes, stirring once. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 12 minutes, stirring after 6 minutes. Stir and set aside to cool.
5 Prepare the pastry. Sieve the flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl. Stir in the suet. Add the water and mix to a soft dough.
6 Divide the dough into 4 portions. Cut off one-third of each portion and set aside. Roll out the dough portions and line 4 lightly oiled 275ml / ½pt pudding basins or pie dishes.
7 Divide the filling amongst the basins and top with the mushrooms.
8 Moisten the rims with cold water. Roll out the remaining pastry portions to form the lids. Top each pudding with a lid and pinch together to seal and flute. Pierce the lid of each pudding to allow the steam to escape.
9 Arrange in a circle in the microwave and cover each loosely with absorbent paper. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-9 minutes, rearranging the puddings once, halfway through.
10 Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then serve. Alternatively, stand for 2-3 minutes, then brush with milk and brown under the grill.

Microtips

If you do not have any 275ml / ½pt pudding basins or pie dishes use large tea-cups, making sure they do not have any metallic decoration.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Pork and Kidney Puddings: instead of suet use hard margarine, grated straight from the refrigerator.

Pork and kidney puddings for 2

17½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15ml / 1tbls seasoned plain flour
225g / 8oz minced pork
2 lamb's kidney's, skinned, cored and sliced
15g / ½oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp corn oil
½ onion, finely chopped
150ml / 5fl oz boiling, well-flavoured stock
2.5ml / ½tsp dried dill
50g / 2oz button mushrooms, sliced
milk for brushing (optional)
½ × Suet Pastry ingredients, see Pork and Kidney Puddings for 4

1 Sprinkle the seasoned flour over the pork and kidneys.
2 Put the butter and oil in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Stir in the pork and kidneys with the onion. Cover and microwave for 1 minute. Stir with a fork. Microwave for a further 1 minute.
3 Stir in the boiling stock and the dill. Cover and microwave for 3 minutes at 100% (High), stirring after 2 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 6 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes. Stir and set aside to cool.
4 Prepare the pastry. Sieve the flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl. Stir in the suet and mix to a soft dough with the water.
5 Divide the dough into 2 portions. Cut off one-third of each portion and set aside. Roll out the dough portions and line 2 lightly oiled 275ml / ½pt pudding basins or pie dishes.
6 Divide the filling between the basins. Top with sliced mushrooms. Moisten the rims with cold water.
7 Roll out 2 lids. Top each pudding and pinch together to seal and flute. Pierce the lid of each pudding to allow the steam to escape.
8 Cover loosely with absorbent paper and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 6-7 minutes, rearranging the puddings once during cooking.
9 Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then serve. Alternatively, stand for 2-3 minutes, then brush the top of the puddings with milk and brown under the grill.

Pork and kidney puddings for 1

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15ml / 1tbls seasoned plain flour
125g / 4oz minced pork
1 lamb's kidney, skinned, cored and sliced
15ml / 1tbls corn oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
65ml / 2½fl oz boiling, well-flavoured stock
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried dill
25g / 1oz button mushrooms, sliced
milk for brushing (optional)
¼ × Suet Pastry ingredients, see Pork and Kidney Puddings for 4

1 Sprinkle the seasoned flour over the pork and kidneys.
2 Put the oil into a 575ml / 1pt casserole. Microwave at 100%

(High) for 30 seconds. Stir in the pork and kidneys with the onion. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds. Break up lumps with a fork. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds.
3 Stir in the boiling stock and the dill. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir once. Reduce to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 5 minutes. Stir after 3 minutes. Stir, set aside.
4 For pastry: sieve flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl. Stir in suet and sprinkle in enough water to mix to a soft dough.
5 Roll out two-thirds of the pastry and line a lightly oiled 275ml / ½pt pudding basin or pie dish.
6 Add the filling to the pudding and top with the mushrooms. Moisten the rim with cold water.
7 Roll out a lid. Top the pudding and pinch together to seal and flute. Pierce the top.
8 Cover loosely with absorbent paper and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-4 minutes, rotate the pudding ¼ turn, once.
9 Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then serve. Alternatively, stand for 2-3 minutes then brush with milk and brown under the grill.

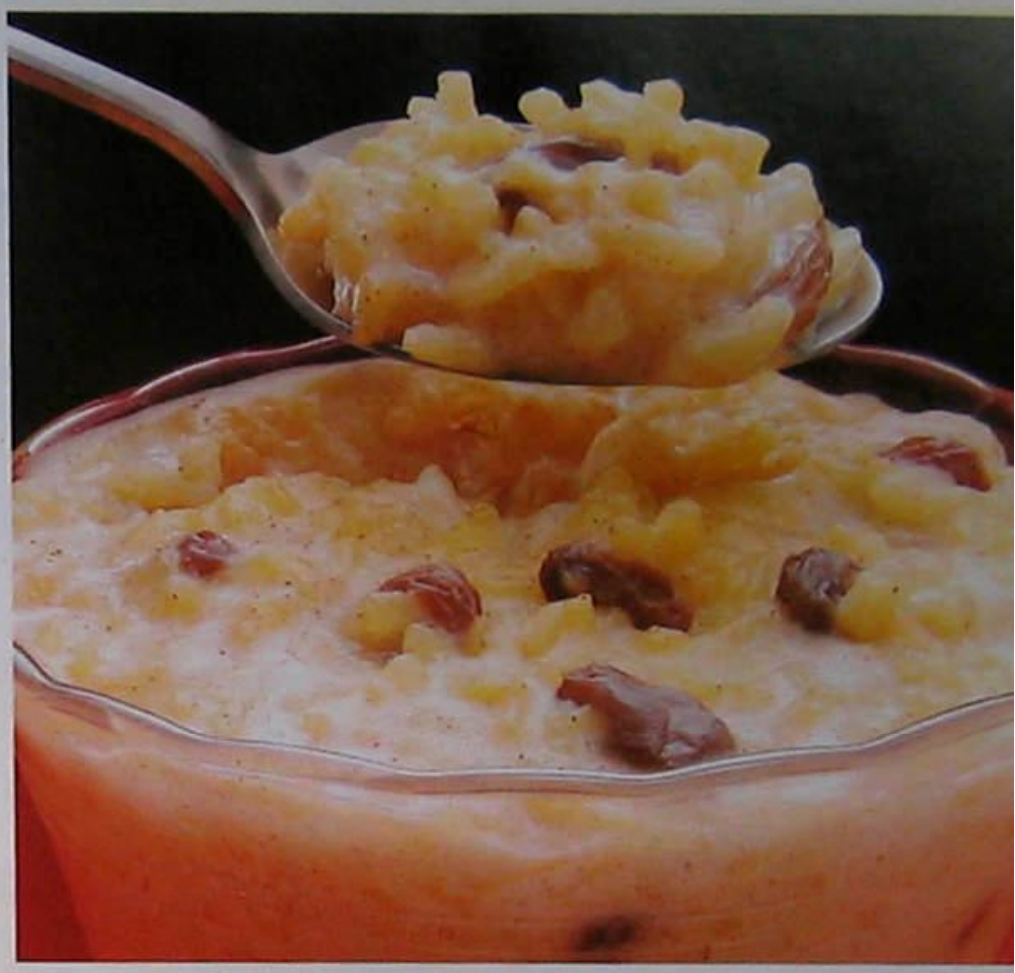
Rice pudding for 4

44 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz short grain rice
750ml / 27fl oz milk
175ml / 6fl oz evaporated milk
75g / 3oz demerara sugar
75g / 3oz raisins, soaked in cold water for 10-15 minutes then drained
pinch of ground cinnamon

1 Put the rice, milk, evaporated milk and sugar into a 3.4L / 6pt casserole.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, stir halfway through and at the end.
3 Reduce to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 35 minutes. Stir after 15 minutes then again 5 minutes later.
4 Stir in the raisins and cinnamon, allow to stand, covered, for 10 minutes before serving.



Rice Pudding for 1

Rice pudding for 2

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz short grain rice
450ml / 16fl oz milk
125ml / 4fl oz evaporated milk
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
50g / 2oz raisins, soaked in cold water for 10-15 minutes then drained
pinch of ground cinnamon

1 Put the rice, milk, evaporated milk and sugar into a 2.3-2.8L / 4-5pt casserole.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir. Microwave for 3 minutes. Stir.
3 Reduce to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 25 minutes, stirring after 15 minutes, then again 5 minutes later.
4 Stir in the raisins and cinnamon and allow to stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.

Rice pudding for 1

20 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

25g / 1oz short grain rice
225ml / 8fl oz milk
50ml / 2fl oz evaporated milk
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
30ml / 2tbls raisins, soaked in cold water for 10-15 minutes then drained
pinch of ground cinnamon

1 Put the rice, milk, evaporated milk and sugar into a 1.7-2.3L / 3-4pt casserole.
2 Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stir, then continue to microwave for a further 2 minutes. Stir.
3 Reduce the power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 17 minutes, stirring after 13 minutes.
4 Stir in the raisins and cinnamon and allow to stand, covered for 3 minutes before serving.

Scones

Scones are part of the great home-baking tradition — an old favourite on the teatime table. Speedy mixing and cooking, however, were never among the scone's advantages, until the advent of the microwave.

DON LAST

Made in the microwave, scones are not only particularly light and airy, but they are simple to make in a matter of minutes, to cater for impromptu visitors.

As microwaving will not produce a browned top, a number of tricks can be used to give an attractive appearance. Place them under a hot grill to brown; alternatively, they can be sprinkled with a crunchy, golden topping before cooking. It is a good idea to keep a choice of toppings in screw-topped jars — toasted bran, wheatgerm, sesame seeds or rolled oats; or biscuit crumbs, crushed cornflakes or crisps.

Use this delicious selection as a guide for adapting your own favourite scone recipes too. Remember that the heavier doughs, particularly those made with wholemeal flour, will require slightly longer cooking and should be raised from the floor of the cooker on the base of an inverted plate or flan dish. This makes sure that they cook evenly.

Scones may be frozen, but as they take about 4 minutes to thaw by microwaving at 20-30% (Defrost), which is roughly the same time they take to cook, it is better to eat them the same day.

Generally, the timings given will suit 600, 650 and 700 watt machines. Check the scones after the shortest recommended time if you are using a powerful model. A 500 watt microwave will take longer to complete cooking, so times are given with each recipe.

Loaves and scone rounds will continue to cook after microwaving — stop cooking as soon as they are springy, then leave to stand.

Left: *Rolled Spice Scones. Brown them under a hot grill for about 1 minute for an appetizing colour.*

Yoghurt scone loaf

3 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
15-30ml / 1-2tbls caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls raisins (optional)
150ml / ¼pt yoghurt
30ml / 2tbls toasted bran

MAKES 9 SCONES OR 1 LOAF

1 Sift the flour, salt and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl. Cut in the butter, then rub in until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.
2 Stir in the sugar and raisins and add enough yoghurt to make a soft, but not sticky dough.
3 Knead lightly in the bowl, then turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Either form into a 2cm / ¾in thick round and cut out 9 scones with a 5cm / 2in cutter or make into a large roll to fit an oiled 575ml / 1pt loaf dish. Mark slits 12mm / ½in deep at 2cm / ¾in intervals across the loaf.
4 Invert a large plate or flan dish in the microwave. Arrange scones in a ring on a non-stick paper on the base of the plate or stand the dish on the plate.
5 Sprinkle the toasted bran over the top of the scones or the loaf. Microwave the scones at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes and the loaf for 4-5 minutes, until well risen and springy to the touch. (For 500 watt, allow 4½ minutes for scones, 5 minutes for a loaf). Turn the scones after 3 minutes and the loaf after 4.
6 Allow the loaf to stand in the dish for 4 minutes then cool on a rack after the standing time.

Below: *Five-minute Scones*

Microtips

Scones cooked by microwave are best eaten fresh from the cooker, while they are light in texture and moist.

While it is not recommended to freeze scones for defrosting and reheating at a later date, it is possible to refresh scones for immediate consumption. If keeping scones overnight, wrap closely in cling film or store in an air-tight container. Microwave the scones at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds each to restore freshness and heat them through. Scones can only be refreshed once in this way, and they should be eaten immediately.

Five-minute scones

3½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
125ml / 4fl oz mixed milk and water
225g / 8oz self-raising flour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar (optional)

MAKES 9 SCONES

1 Place the butter in a bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted.
2 Stir in half the liquid, then sift in the dry ingredients. Mix to a soft, but not sticky dough, adding liquid as necessary.
3 Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead lightly.
4 Pat the dough into 12.5cm / 5in square and cut across twice each way to make 9 scones.
5 Arrange the scones in a large ring on a piece of non-stick paper and brush tops with milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes (5 minutes for 500 watt) until light and well risen. Turn after 2 minutes.
6 If liked, brown quickly under a conventional grill.

Cheese scones

4 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, finely grated
1 egg, beaten
75-105ml / 5-7tbls milk or water
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls toasted breadcrumbs
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried parsley

MAKES 12 SCONES

1 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the butter or margarine until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
2 Stir in the Cheddar cheese, egg and enough liquid to make a soft, but not sticky dough. Knead lightly in the bowl.
3 Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and pat it into a round 12mm / ½in thick. Cut out 12 rounds using a 5cm / 2in cutter.
4 Invert a large plate or flan dish in the microwave. Arrange 6 scones in a circle on a piece of non-stick paper on the base of the upturned plate.
5 Mix the Parmesan cheese with the crumbs and parsley and sprinkle evenly over the top.
6 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes (4 minutes for 500 watt) until risen. Repeat with the remaining scones. Brown lightly under the grill.

Academy oat scone

4 mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup
150ml / ¼pt mixed milk and water
225g / 8oz 81% self-raising flour *
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
45ml / 3tbls rolled oats
15ml / 1tbls rolled oats, toasted

MAKES 6 LARGE PIECES

Academy Oat Scone and Cheese Scones

1 Mix the butter and syrup in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to melt. Stir in half the milk and water mixture.
2 Sift in the flour, salt and baking powder, then add the rolled oats and stir into the liquid. Mix to form a soft, but not sticky dough, adding more liquid as necessary.
3 Invert a large plate or flan dish in the microwave. Pat the dough into a 15cm / 6in round then mark it into 6 wedges with a knife. Place on a piece of non-stick paper on base of inverted plate. Sprinkle with the toasted oats.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes (5 minutes for 500 watt) until well risen and no longer doughy in the centre. Give the scone ½ turn after 3 minutes. Leave to stand for 1 minute.
5 If liked, lightly brown the top of the round under a hot grill just before serving hot with butter and jam or with cheese for a picnic.

* In Australia and New Zealand use normal self-raising flour.

Beech farm scones

4 mins

Standing time: none

200g / 7oz self-raising flour
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz bran
30ml / 2tbls finely-chopped walnuts (optional)
30ml / 2tbls raisins
150ml / ¼pt mixed milk and water
toasted bran for coating

MAKES 9-10 SCONES

1 Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and add the sugar. Cut in the butter or margarine with a knife, then rub in with the fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
2 Stir in the bran, nuts and raisins, then mix in sufficient liquid to make a soft, but not sticky, dough. Knead lightly in the bowl.
3 Turn the scone dough out onto a surface which has been dusted generously with toasted bran. Pat the dough out to a round shape, about 2cm / ¾in thick. Using a 5cm / 2in cutter, cut out 9 or 10 rounds, re-rolling the dough if necessary. Coat the rolls all over with bran.
4 Invert a large plate or flan dish in the microwave and arrange the scones in a circle on a piece of non-stick paper on the base of the upturned plate.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes (6 minutes for 500 watt) until springy and no longer doughy. Give them a ½ turn every 2 minutes and turn over after 6 minutes. Leave to cool on a wire rack before serving.

Rolled spice scones

4¼ mins

Standing time: 4 mins

25g / 1oz butter
90ml / 6tbls fresh brown bread crumbs
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar

Beech Farm Scones

SCONES
225g / 8oz self-raising flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
60-90ml / 4-6 tbls milk

MAKES 9 SCONES

1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds to melt. Stir in the breadcrumbs, cinnamon and soft brown sugar. Set aside.
2 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the butter to resemble fine breadcrumbs.
3 Mix in the sugar, egg and sufficient milk to make a soft, but not sticky dough. Knead in the bowl.
4 Turn the dough onto a lightly floured board and roll to a 15 × 23cm / 6 × 9in rectangle.
5 Scatter the cinnamon crumb mixture over the dough then, starting at a long edge, roll it up like a Swiss roll, sealing the edge with the milk. Cut into slices.
6 Arrange the slices, spiral pattern uppermost, in an oiled 20-23cm / 8-9in flan dish, placing 8 around edge and 1 in middle.
7 Microwave the scones at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes (6 minutes for 500 watt) until well risen and no longer doughy, turning every 2 minutes. Stand 4 minutes. Brown under a hot grill if wished.

Appetizers from the freezer

Appetising snacks and canapés make any party special. Keep a store of them in your freezer and you can invite friends for drinks any time, without worrying about what to offer them.

Using your freezer in conjunction with your microwave means more freedom for impromptu entertaining. You can invite guests for drinks at any time without wondering what on earth to offer them. Now you can enjoy all the fun of a party by spreading the inevitable load of work involved.

Cook and freeze a selection of snacks and canapés in advance to save on time and energy. Thawing and reheating are swiftly and effortlessly done just before the guests arrive. Preparation time, too, is cut by using the microwave for the initial cooking.

Dips stored in the freezer can be thawed in minutes, then served with potato crisps or corn chips.

For more formal occasions, canapés and savoury titbits have become traditional. When a few hot finger snacks are needed, spicy meat or cheeseballs fit the bill. These, too, can be thawed and reheated while you chat to your guests — knowing that the cooker will switch off when the heating time is up.

Delicate canapés will need careful packaging to avoid breakages in the freezer. Cardboard or waxed paper cartons are a useful protection for crisp foods that are easily squashed. When you remove them from the freezer, arrange them on microwave-safe serving plates so that you need only handle them once.

Remember that even when entertaining a large number of people, small quantities freeze and reheat better than larger ones. So freeze the cooked food in several packages. Then you can use just as much as is needed and the rest will keep in good condition.

Individual freezers keep food at slightly different temperatures and variations in the starting temperature of food can affect thawing and reheating times, so check carefully during the microwaving time to make sure the food does not overcook.

Left: *Guacamole Dip*
Right: *Spicy Vegetable dip*

Mexican meatballs

10 mins

Standing time: none

½ onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp olive oil
450g / 1lb minced beef
1 slice white bread, made into breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper
1 egg
45ml / 3tbls green chillies, seeded and chopped

FOR THE SAUCE
425g / 15oz tomato soup
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
large pinch of ground cumin

MAKES 24-30

1 Place the onion, garlic and olive oil in a medium bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Place the minced beef in a food processor and process for several seconds, or chop on a board with 2 knives until in fine pieces. Mix into the onion together with the remaining ingredients.
3 Using a tablespoon, shape the mixture into 24-30 meatballs, about 3cm / 1¼in diameter.
4 Cook half at a time in a large shallow dish. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until set. Rearrange and turn over after half the time.
5 Combine the sauce ingredients in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
6 Divide the meatballs and sauce between 2 small containers. Allow to cool. Label and freeze for up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Transfer the meatballs and sauce from 1 container into a suitable size casserole. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-12 minutes, or until the meatballs are thawed and the sauce is hot, breaking apart with a fork after 5 minutes and stirring once or twice. Repeat with remaining meatballs.

Mexican Meatballs

Spicy vegetable dip

30 mins

Standing time: none

425g / 14.3oz can chopped tomatoes
2 chillies, seeded and chopped
2 green peppers, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls sweet chilli sauce

TO SERVE
350g / 12oz Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream

MAKES 2 LARGE DIPS

1 In a large casserole, combine the dip ingredients.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-35 minutes until the moisture has almost gone. Stir 2-3 times.
3 Spoon into 2 freezer containers. Cover, label and freeze for up to 6 months.

TO SERVE
Shake the grated cheese and flour in a plastic bag. Empty 1 container of dip into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes; stir 1-2 times. Add the cheese and cream. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, stirring 2-3 times. Serve with corn chips.

Guacamole dip

4 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

4 streaky bacon rashers
2 ripe avocados
22.5ml / 1½tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp onion salt
large pinch of chilli powder
1 small tomato, chopped, to serve

MAKES 275ml / ½pt DIP

1 Arrange the bacon on absorbent paper or a roasting rack. Cover with another piece of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes. Leave to stand for 3-5 minutes.
2 Peel and stone the avocados. Mash the flesh with the lemon juice, onion salt and chilli powder. Crumble the bacon and stir into the avocado mixture.
3 Spoon into a suitable freezer container, cover, label and freeze for up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Remove from the container and place in a serving bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, or until thawed but still cold, breaking apart once with a fork. Leave to stand for 10 minutes, then stir in the chopped tomato. Serve with corn chips or crisps.

Spinach-ham canapés

8 mins

Standing time: none

Freezer/microwave containers should be used for this recipe.

2 × 275 / 10oz packets frozen chopped spinach
½ onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
225g / 8oz cream cheese
2 eggs
175g / 6oz ham, chopped
90ml / 6tbls grated cheese

MAKES 18

How to microwave Spinach-ham canapés

Pierce *the spinach packets, place in cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes until warm. Drain well, pressing out all excess moisture.*

Combine *the onion, garlic and oil in a medium bowl; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until tender. Mix in the spinach and flour.*

Press *a scant tablespoon of the spinach mixture over the bottom and sides of 18 small ramekin-shaped dishes to form a shell. Set aside.*

Turn *the cream cheese into a medium bowl, microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute, or until softened. Blend in the remaining ingredients.*

Spoon *the mixture into the spinach-lined dishes. Freeze on a tray until firm. Wrap, label and freeze for no longer than 1 month.*

To serve, *unwrap 6 or 12 on a plate. Cover with paper; microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 or 12-16 minutes; rearrange often; stand 10 minutes.*

Left: *Wheat Cheese Thins*
Right: *Miniature Cheeseballs*

Wheat cheese thins

12 mins

Standing time: 1 min

175g / 6oz Cheddar cheese, grated
75g / 3oz plain flour
75g / 3oz wholewheat flour
100g / 4oz butter
large pinch of caraway seed
6 drops tabasco sauce
grated Parmesan cheese
paprika

MAKES 48

1 In a medium bowl, combine the Cheddar cheese, flours, butter, caraway seed and tabasco sauce. Beat with an electric mixer until well blended.
2 Roll out to a 3mm / ⅛in thickness on a floured surface. Cut with small biscuit cutters. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and paprika.
3 Freeze on trays until firm. Package in 3 freezer containers with freezer layering tissue between layers. Label and freeze for up to 2 weeks.

TO SERVE
Remove 12 thins from the freezer. Line the base of the cooker with absorbent paper and arrange the thins in a circle on top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until the cheese thins appear dry, turning 2-3 times. Leave to stand for 1 minute before moving to a wire rack and leaving to cool. Repeat with the remaining thins.

Miniature cheeseballs

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

The cream mixture is a little sticky to work, but do not be put off as the end result is excellent.

225g / 8oz cream cheese
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, finely grated
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese spread
½ onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls brandy
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp paprika
6 drops tabasco sauce
175g / 6oz walnuts, finely chopped

MAKES 36

1 Place the cream cheese and grated Cheddar cheese in a medium casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.
2 Add the Cheddar cheese spread and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 seconds, or until the cheese is softened. Beat until smooth.
3 Place the onion, garlic and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
4 Stir into the cheese mixture together with the Worcestershire sauce, brandy, parsley, paprika and tabasco. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
5 Shape carefully into 36 balls, 2.5cm / 1in diameter, and roll in the chopped walnuts. Arrange on greaseproof paper-lined trays, large enough so that the cheeseballs do not touch.
6 Freeze until firm, pack in 3 freezer containers, label and freeze for up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Remove the cheeseballs from container and place in a circle on a serving plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-2 minutes, or until thawed but still cool. Rotate the plate every 30 seconds. Leave to stand for 3-5 minutes before serving. Repeat as required.

Italian dinner

The colourful cuisine of the Mediterranean is easy to produce with a microwave. Enjoy the taste of Italy in all these delicious but simple dishes — made all the simpler with a step-by-step countdown.

Italian cuisine is much more varied than its 'pizza and pasta' reputation suggests. However, pasta plays an important role in the Italian diet, so no typical meal is complete without pasta of some description. This menu is no exception — it also makes use of the sun-fed abundance of fruit and vegetables which add so much flavour and goodness to Italian food.

Many Italian meat dishes are cooked in a sauce, so they adapt very well for microwave cooking. These stuffed veal rolls are served in a light wine stock with spinach noodles and glazed carrots.

As Italy is the home of ice cream, what better finale to the meal than an elegant ice cream bombe made of two layers of ice cream with a cream and candied fruit centre. It can be made ahead and stored in the freezer until ready to serve.

As much of the preparation can be done in advance, this is an ideal meal for entertaining; reheat the soup, and, if necessary, the veal, and cook the pasta conventionally while the carrots are microwaved. The ice cream needs only a little time to soften while the rest of the meal is served.

Although pasta is easy to cook by microwave, and the results are excellent, there is little difference in the time it takes by microwave, using either fresh or dry pasta. It is therefore recommended that you cook the pasta conventionally while you use the microwave to better effect for other dishes.

MENU

Pea Soup with Crostini
Traditional soup with cheese toasts

Stuffed Veal Rolls
Escalopes with an Italian-style filling

Tagliatelle Verde
Light spinach noodles tossed in butter

Carrots with Marsala
Glazed carrots with wine

Ice Cream Bombe
A classic three-flavoured iced dessert

Countdown

The day before
Make the Ice Cream Bombe and freeze.

Early on the day
Prepare and cook the Pea Soup. Store it in the refrigerator in a serving tureen or bowl. Clean and cut the carrots, then keep in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Prepare the veal escalopes, make the stuffing, then assemble the rolls. Keep in the refrigerator.

One hour before serving.
Cook the carrots and leave to stand covered. Heat the browning dish in the microwave, then cook the veal rolls. Transfer veal rolls to a serving dish, then cover. Prepare the Crostini then reheat the soup at 100% (High) for 12 minutes. Unmould the bombe and return it to the freezer. Boil the water for the pasta. Stir the soup once during reheating, then serve with the Crostini.

During the soup course
Microwave the Stuffed Veal Rolls, covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 6 minutes. Cook the pasta conventionally in boiling salted water and microwave the carrots at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Serve the main course.

During the main course
Leave the ice cream to soften at room temperature before serving.

Beat out the veal between sheets of damp greaseproof paper until thin.

Spread filling over veal to within 12mm / ½in of edges. Roll up and secure with wooden cocktail sticks.

Pea soup

38 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, finely chopped
60ml / 4tbls celery leaves, finely chopped
25g / 1oz cooked ham, chopped
450g / 1lb frozen peas
50g / 2oz unsalted butter
575ml / 1pt light chicken stock
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion, celery leaves, ham, peas and butter in a medium-sized casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring once.
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 10 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes.
3 Add the stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring again after 5 minutes. Allow the soup to cool a little, then purée in a blender.
4 Return the soup to the casserole and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes to reheat. Serve hot with the Crostini.

Crostini

2 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
4 slices of bread, crusts removed
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
10ml / 2tsp grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds to melt.
2 Brush the butter over the bread. Place on absorbent paper in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until sizzling.
3 Mix the cheeses together and sprinkle over the bread. Return to the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 15 seconds.
4 Brown under a hot grill.

Stuffed veal rolls

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 × 275g / 10oz veal escalopes
4 thin slices of Parma ham *
60ml / 4tbls chopped, blanched almonds
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls sultanas
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
150ml / ¼pt white wine or light chicken stock

SERVES 4

1 Lay each veal escalope between 2 layers of dampened greaseproof paper and beat out gently to flatten. Cut each escalope in half.
2 Cut each slice of Parma ham in half to match the veal and arrange ½ a slice on top of each piece.
3 Mix together the almonds, cheese, parsley and sultanas. Divide this mixture between the 8 pieces of veal and spread evenly to within 12mm / ½in of the edges.
4 Roll up each slice and secure with a wooden cocktail stick.
5 Heat a browning dish by microwaving at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or as instructed by manufacturer. Add the oil and tilt the dish to make sure the whole surface is covered.
6 Press the rolls down firmly onto the dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
7 Turn the rolls over and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes. Add the white wine or

chicken stock and cover the dish.
8 Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Garnish with a little additional chopped parsley.

* In Australia and New Zealand use double smoked ham.

Carrots with Marsala

19½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb carrots, cut in 2.5cm / 1in pieces
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp soft brown sugar
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls Marsala
60ml / 4tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter, sugar, salt, pepper, Marsala and water in a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole. Mix well.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Add the carrots and stir well to coat them all over.
3 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 15 minutes. Stir well every 5 minutes to distribute the heat evenly.
4 Remove the lid and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-5 minutes.
5 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving with the Marsala-flavoured cooking liquid.

Tagliatelle verde

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb fresh green tagliatelle
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Fill a saucepan with water. Add oil and salt and bring to boil.
2 Add pasta and cook conventionally stirring occasionally. Test after 3 minutes. (Allow 12-15 minutes for dried pasta.)
3 The noodles are cooked when they are no longer chewy, but just resist when bitten. Drain well and return to the pan. Add the butter and toss vigorously to coat pasta all over. Season to taste.

Ice cream bombe

10 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Vanilla Ice cream (see page 362)
½ quantity Strawberry Ice cream (see page 363)
275ml / ½pt double cream
50g / 2oz blanched almonds, chopped
50g / 2oz mixed candied fruit, chopped
mint leaves, to decorate

SERVES 4-6

1 Microwave ice creams (see recipes).
2 Allow both flavours of ice cream to freeze until almost hard.
3 Press vanilla ice cream around base and sides of a 1.4L / 2½pt bombe mould. Return to freezer until hard.
4 Use ½ the quantity of strawberry ice cream to make a second layer in the mould, leaving a space in the middle. Freeze until hard.
5 Whip the cream and stir the almonds and fruit into two-thirds of the cream. Spoon into the bombe and freeze for several hours until solid. Pipe the remaining cream as a decoration. Decorate with mint leaves.

Quick Chinese dishes

Chinese food is extremely popular and makes a particularly colourful and delicious meal suitable for any occasion — and these dishes are ready in minutes when cooked in a microwave.

The vegetables used in Chinese dishes cook perfectly in the microwave, giving a tender yet crisp result, retaining all their flavour and bright fresh colour.

To create the right atmosphere for a Chinese meal, aromatic China tea (such as Oolong, Lapsang souchong and jasmine) is traditionally drunk through the meal. Serve with lemon, if liked.

Vegetable chop suey

14 mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
1 egg
salt and pepper
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 onion, finely chopped
4 spring onions, the white parts cut in 2.5cm / 1in lengths and the green ends chopped finely
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
½ red pepper, finely chopped
25g / 1oz margarine
15ml / 1tbls cornflour
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
150ml / ¼pt water
15ml / 1tbls tomato sauce
280g / 11oz can beansprouts,

SERVES 2 AS A MEAL OR 4 AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT

1 Brush a 23cm / 9in plate with the oil. Beat the egg with salt and pepper and pour over plate to coat evenly. Microwave, uncovered, at at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until set; turn twice. Slip a knife under omelette to loosen, then roll and slice thinly.

2 Put celery in a bowl with onion, the white parts of spring onions, mushrooms and red pepper. Add margarine and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes; stir twice.

3 Blend cornflour with soy sauce, water and tomato sauce. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) 2-3 minutes; stir twice.

4 Drain beansprouts and mix with the sauce and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for for 4 minutes; stir twice. Top with omelette and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Garnish with spring onion ends.

Vegetable Chop Suey and Vegetable Fried Rice

Sweet and sour fish fillets

8 mins

Standing time: none

4 fish fillets (weighing approx 450g / 1lb), skinned
30ml / 2tbls sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls finely-chopped chives (or 5ml / 1tsp dried chives)
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
225g / 8oz can pineapple chunks, drained and juice reserved
30ml / 2tbls vinegar
5-10ml / 1-2tsp soy sauce
25g / 1oz salted cashew nuts

SERVES 4

1 Arrange fish fillets in a shallow 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in baking dish. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Rotate the dish ½ turn after half the cooking time.
2 Combine the sugar, cornflour, chives and mustard in a bowl, blend in 75ml / 3fl oz pineapple juice, the vinegar and soy sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) about 2 minutes until thickened, stirring once or twice during cooking. Stir in pineapple chunks and nuts.
3 Drain the fish well, then coat with the sauce and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Serve hot with plain boiled rice, if liked.

Sweet and Sour Fish Fillets

Sautéed celery

6 mins

Standing time: none

8 celery stalks, cut diagonally into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
3 spring onions, thinly sliced
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 small garlic clove, crushed
pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt
1 canned pimiento, cut into 12mm / ½in-long strips

SERVES 4

1 Put the celery, spring onions, butter, garlic and pepper in a medium bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until tender but still crisp, stirring after half the cooking time.
2 Stir in sugar, salt and canned pimiento and serve hot.

Vegetable fried rice

10 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz frozen, cut green beans, thawed
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn with peppers, drained
1 small onion, or 2 spring onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, finely chopped
3 tender spring green or cabbage leaves, finely shredded
227g / 8oz can bamboo shoots, rinsed, drained and chopped

Sautéed Celery

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
277g / 10oz can ready-cooked 3 minute rice

SERVES 4

1 Place the beans in a bowl with the sweetcorn, onion, carrot, greens and bamboo shoots. Mix in oil, salt and pepper and soy sauce.
2 Heat a 25cm / 10in browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Add the vegetable mixture, stir well then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until tender but still crisp.
3 Stir in cooked rice; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until all the ingredients are piping hot.

Egg foo yung

21½ mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
225ml / 8fl oz water
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
½ chicken stock cube
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
large pinch ground ginger
3 spring onions, finely chopped
½ green pepper, finely chopped
15g / ½oz margarine
280g / 10oz can beansprouts, rinsed and drained
100g / 4oz peeled prawns
6 eggs, beaten
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS

Fresh beansprouts may be used instead of the canned type. If preferred, omit the prawns and add the same quantity of thin strips of ham or cooked chicken, or use a mixture. Serve sprinkled with chopped red pepper.

How to microwave Egg foo yung

Blend *the cornflour smoothly with the water in a 1.1L / 2pt measuring jug. Stir in the soy sauce, crumbled stock cube, sugar and ground ginger. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until thickened, stirring briskly twice during the cooking time to keep the sauce smooth. Keep on one side while cooking the egg and prawn mixture.*

Place *the onions, green pepper and margarine in a large dish. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-5 minutes until the vegetables are tender but still crisp, stirring the mixture halfway through cooking to distribute the heat evenly throughout. Stir in the beansprouts, prawns, beaten eggs and salt and pepper to taste.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until mixture begins to set round edges. Stir, pushing cooked portions to centre, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-11 minutes until set, rotating dish ½ turn twice during cooking. Reheat sauce, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Spoon over egg mixture and serve immediately.*

Rhubarb

None of the tangy taste of fresh rhubarb is lost in the microwave. Poached in a little juice for just six minutes it is ready to eat or add to any number of mouthwatering recipes.

Rhubarb gives a distinctive taste to all kinds of puddings and cakes. It is available from mid-winter to mid-summer. Early rhubarb is recognizable by its pale pink colour and is tender to eat, whereas the main crop becomes darker and has a stronger flavour.

Poached or stewed in the microwave with just 30ml / 2tbls water, and sugar and lemon juice to taste, you can have a refreshingly tangy dessert in 6 minutes.

Then, when whipped up with cream, rhubarb makes a delectable fool (see page 439). It also makes an excellent filling for a pie or fruity crumble (see page 438). Or for something a little bit different for either a dessert or tea, try the Walnut and Rhubarb Cake (page 439). It will serve four to six people as a dessert.

Always remember when preparing rhubarb to cut off and discard the leaves. Cut the stems into even-sized pieces.

Rhubarb Crumble

DON LAST

How to select and store rhubarb

Choose *firm, crisp, brightly coloured stalks. Young stems with immature leaves will be the most tender and delicate in flavour.*

Avoid *very thin stalks or those which are large and tough looking; these are either under- or over-mature. Cut off and discard the leaves before storing.*

Wrap *the stalks loosely in cling film and refrigerate. Fresh rhubarb keeps up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator, but wilts at room temperature.*

How to microwave rhubarb

Cut *350g / 12oz rhubarb into 2.5cm / 1in lengths. Put in a bowl with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover with cling film rolled back or a loose fitting lid.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until the rhubarb is slightly transparent and tender, stirring after half the cooking time.*

Stir *in 100g / 4oz sugar and 5ml / 1tsp lemon juice. Let stand, covered, 2-3 minutes. For a smooth sauce, purée the rhubarb.*

Rhubarb crumble

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb trimmed rhubarb, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
finely grated rind of 1 lemon
75g / 3oz caster sugar
whipped cream, to serve

TOPPING
50g / 2oz plain flour
75ml / 5tbls muesli
45ml / 3tbls demerara sugar
50g / 2oz butter or margarine

SERVES 4

1 Put the rhubarb, lemon rind and caster sugar into a 20cm / 8in pie dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes stirring halfway through.
2 To prepare the topping, mix the flour, muesli and sugar together in a bowl, then rub in the butter or margarine.
3 Sprinkle the topping mixture evenly over the microwaved rhubarb. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-8 minutes, rotating 3-4 times. Let stand for 5 minutes. Serve with whipped cream.

Rhubarb and custard pie

12½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb trimmed rhubarb, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths, or frozen rhubarb pieces, thawed at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes
175g / 6oz caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2 eggs
125ml / 4fl oz double cream
1.5ml / ¼tsp freshly grated nutmeg
1 cooked pie case (see page 370)

SERVES 6

1 Combine the rhubarb, sugar and flour in a mixing bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, rotating the dish half a turn and stirring the rhubarb from half-way through cooking. Allow to cool for 5 minutes.
3 Lightly beat the eggs, cream and nutmeg in a bowl, then pour the mixture into the rhubarb. Stir well and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring twice during the cooking time and after the cooking has finished.
4 Pour the thickened mixture into the pie case, leave to cool then refrigerate until set firm.

Creamy rhubarb fool

7 mins

Standing time: none

550g / 1¼lb trimmed rhubarb, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
175g / 6oz caster sugar
425ml / ¾pt double cream
mint leaves, to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Put the rhubarb and lemon juice into a large casserole dish. Cover with a lid or cling film rolled back at one edge. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until the rhubarb is slightly transparent and tender, stirring after half the time.
2 Stir the sugar into the rhubarb, then allow to cool. Purée the rhubarb in a blender or pass through a fine sieve.
3 Whisk 275ml / ½pt of the cream until it stands in soft peaks. Gently fold the rhubarb purée and whisked cream together until smooth.
4 Spoon the rhubarb fool into 6 serving glasses, then refrigerate until well chilled.
5 Whisk the remaining cream until it stands in stiff peaks. Spoon or pipe the cream on top of the chilled fools. Decorate with the mint leaves.

Fresh rhubarb compote

12 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz caster sugar
275ml / ½pt boiling water
thinly pared rind and strained juice of 1 orange
30ml / 2tbls ginger syrup from a jar of preserved stem ginger
550g / 1¼lb trimmed rhubarb, cut into 4cm / 1½in lengths
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped preserved stem ginger

SERVES 4

1 Put the sugar and water into a large casserole and stir well until the sugar is dissolved. Add the orange rind. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Remove the orange rind from the syrup with a slotted spoon, then stir in the orange juice and ginger syrup. Arrange the rhubarb pieces evenly in the dish.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until the rhubarb is only just tender, rearranging every 2 minutes.
4 Stir the chopped ginger into the rhubarb compote, then cool and chill thoroughly before serving. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream, and shortbread biscuits.

Walnut and rhubarb cake

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

275g / 10oz plain flour
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
225g / 8oz soft dark brown sugar
175g / 6oz soft margarine
4 eggs
60ml / 4tbls milk
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
225g / 8oz trimmed rhubarb, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
275ml / ½pt double cream

TOPPING
30ml / 2tbls granulated sugar
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar

Walnut and Rhubarb Cake

45ml / 3tbls chopped walnuts
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

MAKES 20cm / 8in LAYER CAKE

1 Grease two deep 20cm / 8in sandwich dishes. Line the bases with greaseproof paper.
2 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt and baking powder into a mixing bowl, making a well in the centre.
3 Add the sugar, margarine, eggs, milk and lemon juice to the flour. Blend together, then beat well for 2-3 minutes.
4 Add the rhubarb pieces to the cake mixture and mix well. Divide between the prepared dishes and spread evenly.
5 Mix together the topping ingredients and set aside.
6 Microwave 1 sponge at a time at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, rotating the dish ¼ turn after 3 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 3 minutes. Sprinkle with half of the topping mixture. Microwave for a further 1-1½ minutes, or until a cocktail stick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Leave to stand for 5 minutes before turning out. Repeat with the second cake.
7 Whip the cream until standing in stiff peaks. Sandwich the sponge together with the cream.

Cream meringues

No more long, slow tedious waiting is necessary when making meringues. Now, with a microwave, a batch of light, airy meringues can be cooked in just 12 minutes with the minimum of time and effort.

Meringues made the traditional way may take several hours to dry out and become crisp in a conventional oven. In the microwave they can be ready in minutes.

The mixture differs from the usual whisked egg white and caster sugar proportions, using lightly frothed egg white and icing sugar instead.

Make up the one egg quantity given and fill as many as required with cream. The rest will keep several weeks in an airtight tin.

Cream meringues

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins per batch

MERINGUE
1 egg white
350g / 12oz icing sugar

FILLING
whipped double cream, to taste
a few drops vanilla flavouring

MAKES 24

VARIATIONS

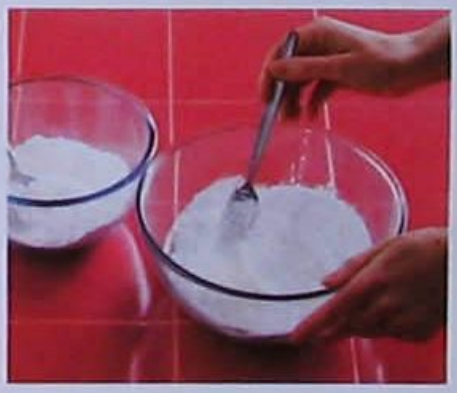
Pink meringues: Tint ½ the icing with a few drops of pink food colouring in Step 3. Knead until evenly blended.

Chocolate meringues: Drizzle a little melted chocolate over the cold, cooked meringue halves. Leave to set before sandwiching halves with whipped cream.

Flavoured cream: Omit vanilla flavouring. Add a few drops of coffee essence or 5-10ml / 1-2tsp Cointreau or kirsch to the cream before whipping.

How to microwave Cream meringues

Put *the egg white into a medium-sized bowl and froth it up lightly with a fork to break up. Sift the icing sugar before mixing with the egg white.*



Gradually *add a little icing sugar, mixing with a fork until thick. Add rest of icing sugar and mix well by hand to form a stiff mixture.*

Knead *the mixture well by hand on an icing-sugared board to form a smooth ball and then mould the mixture into an even width, sausage-shaped roll.*

Cut *into pieces and form into 48 balls. Put 6 at a time on greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ to 2 minutes until risen and crisp.*

Leave *to stand for 5 minutes. Carefully remove from paper and cool on a wire rack. Repeat procedure with remaining icing sugar balls.*

Sandwich *the cold meringue halves together with vanilla-flavoured cream. Serve within 15 minutes of assembling or the meringues will become soft.*

BON LAIT

Roasting beef

Whether it's for Sunday lunch or a quick but appetising midweek meal, a joint of beef roasts beautifully in the microwave. Gravy is quick and easy too.

Always cook meat from room temperature — so remove from refrigerator about one hour before cooking (unless you live in a hot climate). Joints of 1.4kg / 3lb and over will brown quite successfully in a microwave, but to increase colouring simply brush meat before cooking with a browning agent, such as a mixture of tomato sauce and brown sugar. Place in a roasting bag to further encourage browning.

Stand the joint on a microwave roasting rack or upturned plate in a roasting bag so that the meat cooks away from it juices, which can be used for gravy. Cooking times vary according to the density of the joint. The chart on page 443 gives rough guides to timings for smaller joints.

For joints over 1.4kg / 3lb a microwave thermometer or meat probe inserted into the meatiest part of the joint will give more accurate results. Decide on doneness required and cook until the temperature reaches that in the chart. Turn the joint once halfway though the cooking time. Stand for 20 minutes after cooking, covered loosely with foil, shiny side inside.

Rib of Beef on the Bone

How to roast beef

Choose *red-coloured beef with creamy-coloured fat. Remove from refrigerator and stand at room temperature for 1 hour before cooking.*

Place *joint, fat side down, on a roasting rack or on an upturned tea plate so the juices can drain away. Place in a roasting bag.*

Place *on a roasting tray and fasten the roasting bag loosely with an elastic band or plastic chip, allowing room for steam to escape.*

Insert *a microwave thermometer or probe through the bag into the meatiest part of the joint to ensure the joint cooks to the desired doneness.*

Microwave *as recommended in chart. Remove when joint reaches correct finishing temperature for required doneness. Turn joint over once.*

Cover *cooked joint loosely with foil, shiny side in, and leave to stand for 20 minutes to tenderize the meat and make it easier to carve.*

Microwave times for roasting beef

CUT OF BEEF	REQUIRED DONENESS	TOTAL COOKING TIME	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)	FINISHING TEMPERATURE
Rib (on the bone)	Rare	7-8 mins per lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	56°C / 133°F
	Medium	13-14 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	64°C / 147°F
	Well done	15 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	72°C / 162°F
Rib (boned and rolled)	Rare	11-12 mins per lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	56°C / 133°F
	Medium	13-14 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	64°C / 147°F
	Well Done	15-16 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	72°C / 162°F
Sirloin (boned and rolled)	Rare	8-9 mins per lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	56°C / 133°F
	Medium	11-12 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	64°C / 147°F
	Well Done	15-16 mins per lb	5 mins	As above	72°C / 162°F

Garlic beef

33 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

The recipe timing is for medium cooked meat.

1.4kg / 3lb sirloin of boned, rolled beef
25g / 1oz blanched almonds, halved lengthways

MARINADE
2-3 cloves garlic, crushed
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
30ml / 2tbls corn oil
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls whole grain mustard

SERVES 6

1 Calculate cooking time according to chart on page 443.
2 Make small incisions in fat of joint. Insert ½ almonds into each.
3 Combine marinade ingredients, and brush over joint. Cover and stand for 2 hours.
4 Prepare the meat for microwaving (see steps 2-4, page 443).
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for remainder of time. Brush joint with marinade halfway through cooking time, and turn over.
6 Stand, covered, for 20 minutes.

Gravy for roast beef

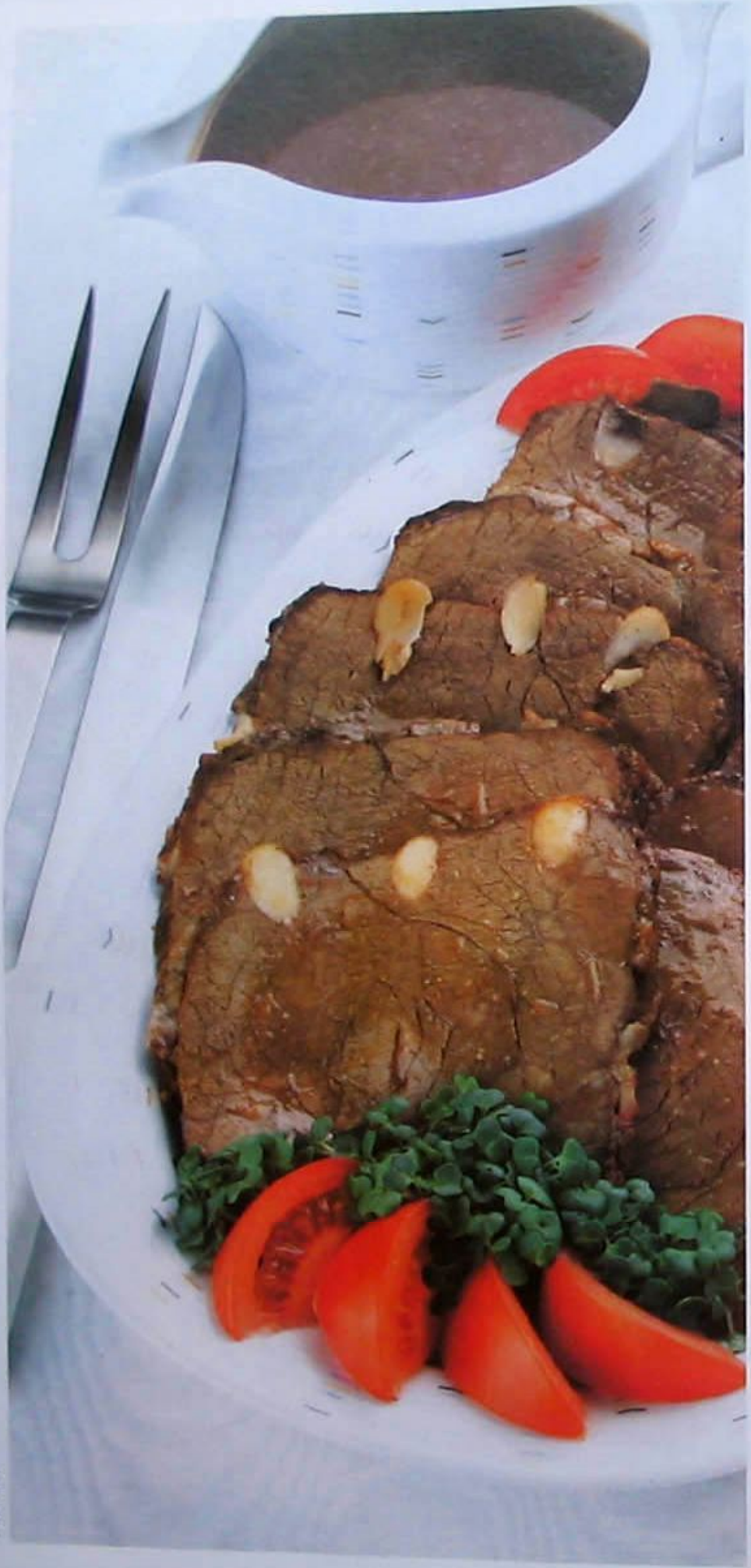
4 mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz beef dripping or butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
435ml / ¾pt warm beef stock
30ml / 2tbls red wine
150ml / ¼pt meat juices

SERVES 6

1 Place dripping into 1L / 1¾pt jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until very hot.
2 Stir in flour and seasoning then beef stock and wine. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, beating every minute.
3 Stir in meat juices and serve.



Summer desserts

The soft fruits of summer need only the gentlest microwaving to make delicious, fresh desserts with light textures and melt-in-the mouth flavours. These light puddings make an irresistible finale to a meal.

Microwave your summer desserts and you avoid heat in the kitchen, stay cool and cut down cooking time.

This assortment of recipes offers a choice for any occasion, from an everyday, spur-of-the-moment pudding, to a special dinner party dish.

Gentle cooking is important for fruit desserts — microwaving is therefore ideal for softening marshmallows, setting cream custards, melting chocolate and heating fruit (all of which might be spoiled by direct heating).

In some recipes, the main fruit ingredient can be replaced by another similar one — except the Summer Pudding, which is traditionally made with red fruits. Similarly, if the fresh fruit is not available, the frozen variety can be used. Thaw by microwave and use according to the recipe.

Summer Pudding

Summer pudding

50 secs

Standing time: 1 hour

225g / 8oz raspberries
100g / 4oz blackcurrants, stalks removed
100g / 4oz redcurrants, stalks removed
225g / 8oz black cherries, pitted
175g / 6oz caster sugar
225g / 8oz strawberries, hulled
6-8 slices of white sandwich loaf, cut medium-thick

SERVES 6

1 Combine all the prepared fruit except the strawberries, in a bowl and stir in the caster sugar and 15ml / 1tbls water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 50-60 seconds, stirring twice. Leave the fruit to stand for 1 hour.
3 Remove the crusts from the bread and cut across diagonally, just offset from opposite corners to make wedge shapes.
4 Arrange the bread so the slices just overlap around the sides of a 1.1L / 2pt pudding bowl, with the thicker end of the wedges to the top. Cut a small piece of bread for the base and one to fit the top.
5 Cut the strawberries in half and add to the fruit mixture. Stir well and turn into the bread-lined bowl. Cover with a bread 'lid'.
6 Cover the bowl with a small plate or saucer which just fits snugly inside the top of the rim. Weight it down and leave to chill overnight.
7 Just before serving, run a knife around the inside of the bowl, then invert the pudding onto a serving dish.
8 Serve pudding with whipped cream. This is best served on individual helpings as it will become pink if piped straight onto the pudding.

Cook's notes

Factory-baked bread tends to become soggy when steeped in fruit juice, so it is best to use 'baker-made' bread.

Microtips

Stale bread absorbs the juices better than if it is absolutely fresh, so if your bread is very fresh, place slices on a cardboard egg box for support in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 50-90 seconds, then leave until cold before using. This method also makes bread easier to make into crumbs.

Summer fruit yoghurt mallow

6½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz raspberries
225g / 8oz rhubarb, cut in 2.5cm / 1in pieces
60ml / 4tbls sugar
128g / 4oz marshmallows
150ml / ¼pt yoghurt
150ml / ¼pt double cream

SERVES 4-6

1 Place all but 4-6 of the raspberries in a bowl and mix with the rhubarb and sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the fruit is tender, stirring every 2 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes, then sieve well.
2 Spoon the purée into a bowl with the marshmallows. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until puffy.
3 Stir well to make a smooth mixture. Allow to cool, then fold in the yoghurt.
4 Divide the mixture between 4-6 individual dishes. Chill for about 1 hour. Whip the cream and use to fill a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle. Pipe rosettes on the tops and add a raspberry on each.

VARIATION
This pudding could also be made using other summer fruit, to make about 450g / 1lb purée.

Cook's notes

When sieving the fruit for the purée, it is best to use a nylon sieve, as metal ones tend to make the fruit discolour and can affect the flavour of the dessert.

Summer Fruit Yoghurt Mallow

IRON LAST

Mango mousse

1½ mins

Standing time: none

135g / 4½oz packet orange jelly
225ml / 8fl oz water
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1 fresh ripe mango
juice of 1 lemon
150ml / ¼pt double cream
2 egg whites
pared zest of 1 orange to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Break the jelly into pieces and place in a measuring jug with the water. Cover with cling film, rolled back at one edge, and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir well to dissolve the jelly, then stir in the sugar. Set aside to cool.
2 Slice the mango in half, cutting to one side of the flat stone. Scoop the flesh into a food processor or blender and purée. (Alternatively it can be pressed through a sieve

with a wooden spoon.)
3 Add the purée to the measuring jug, and make the level up to 575ml / 1pt with water if necessary.
4 Pour the jelly mixture into a bowl and stir in the lemon juice.
5 Refrigerate until starting to set, so that it is the consistency of softly-whipped cream.
6 Lightly whip the cream and fold two-thirds of it into the jelly until smoothly blended.
7 Whisk the egg whites until stiff, then gently fold into the fruit cream. Either turn into a 1.1L / 2pt serving bowl, or divide between 6 individual glasses or sundae bowls.
8 Pipe the remaining cream onto the top as a decoration.
9 Slice the pared orange zest into very fine strips and scatter over the mousse either around the edge or in rosettes on small individual bowls.

Tropical lemon gateau

9½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz soft margarine
100g / 4oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz plain flour
2 eggs
45ml / 3tbls milk
2 lemons
150g / 5oz sugar
100ml / 3½fl oz water
1 small fresh pineapple, (or a 425g / 15oz can of slices in natural juice, drained)
275ml / ½pt double cream
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar
few green grapes, to decorate

SERVES 8

How to microwave Tropical lemon gateau

Line *the base and sides of a 1.1L / 2pt round pudding or rectangular loaf dish with cling film, making sure that it fits closely all round and leaves no pockets of air.*

Combine *the margarine, caster sugar, flour, eggs and milk in a bowl. Beat well for about 3 minutes until light and creamy. When smooth, stir in zest grated from the lemons.*

Pour *the mixture into the prepared dish and stand on an upturned plate in the cooker. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, turning the dish every 2 minutes, until just dry.*

Allow *the cake to stand, in the dish, for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the lemons in half and squeeze the juice. Mix the juice with the sugar and water in a jug.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High for 1½-2 minutes, then stir to dissolve the sugar. Prick the cake, still in the dish, all over with a cocktail stick and slowly pour on the syrup.*

Cover *the dish and refrigerate overnight. Cut the crown from the pineapple and set aside. Remove the skin from the pineapple and cut into slices. Reserve 2-3 and chop the rest.*

Whip *the cream and icing sugar until thick. Set aside three-quarters of cream and fold the chopped pineapple into rest. Turn out cake and slice in half horizontally.*

Sandwich *the halves together with the cream and pineapple mixture. Coat with remaining cream and decorate with the pineapple, the grapes and the crown. Serve same day.*

DON LAST

JOIN LAST

Gooseberry fool

7½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Gooseberry fool is a classic dessert in which the sharp flavour of the fruit is complemented by the sweetness of a creamy custard mixture. It is important for the texture that, even if the fruit is puréed by blender, it should be sieved to remove all the pips.

450g / 1lb gooseberries, topped and tailed
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt milk
1 egg, beaten
150ml / ¼pt double cream
60ml / 4tbls sugar
6 ratafia biscuits to decorate (optional)

SERVES 6

1 Place the gooseberries in a bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes until the fruit is soft.
2 Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then press through a sieve to make a purée.
3 Mix the cornflour with the milk in a small bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until thick, stirring after 1 minute, beating well when cooked.
4 Mix the hot sauce with the purée, then stir the beaten egg into the hot mixture. Allow to cool.
5 Whip the cream with the sugar until thick, then fold it gently into the fruit custard.
6 Spoon the fool into six tall glasses, then leave to chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours.
7 Serve with ratafia biscuits.

Tropical Lemon Gateau

VARIATION

Fruit fools: A fool is particularly refreshing made with tart fruit such as gooseberries, but any sharp flavoured fruit can be cooked in the same way to make 275ml / ½pt purée. If the flavour is too bland, add a little lemon juice according to taste.

Freezer notes

If using frozen gooseberries, place them in a bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-10 minutes, then allow to stand for 5 minutes. The cooked purée could be frozen, but cream should be only be added after it has been thawed, as cream may separate after it has been thawed.

Chocolate orange layers

3 mins

Standing time: none

This dessert can be made using any fresh fruit in season.

312g / 11oz can mandarin oranges
150ml / ¼pt double cream
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar
100g / 4oz plain cooking chocolate
2 eggs, separated

SERVES 6

1 Drain the mandarins, reserve the juice and 6 whole segments and set aside. Chop the remainder coarsely.
2 Whip the cream with the sugar until thick. Fold in the chopped mandarins.
3 Break the chocolate into pieces in a bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes, stirring after 1 minute.
4 Stir the egg yolks with 30ml / 2tbls of the reserved mandarin juice, then mix gently into the melted chocolate.
5 Whisk the egg whites until stiff and meringue-like, then fold in the chocolate mixture using a metal spoon, until smooth.
6 Starting with chocolate mousse, layer the 2 mixtures in six 100ml / 3½fl oz glasses. Finish each one off with a layer of chocolate.
7 Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, then serve topped with a mandarin. (Save remaining mandarin juice for a jelly or sauce.)

Chocolate and Orange Layer

Cook's notes

To make a special occasion dessert, add 15-30ml / 1-2tbls orange liqueur to the whipped cream and orange mixture and use according to the recipe.

Blackcurrant crème brûlée

10 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz blackcurrants, stalks removed
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls sugar
100ml / 3½fl oz water
4 egg yolks
275ml / ½pt single cream
45-60ml / 3-4tbls caster sugar

SERVES 6

1 Combine the blackcurrants, cornflour, sugar and water in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until thick, stirring once.
2 Divide the blackcurrant mixture between 6 small ramekins, allow to cool then refrigerate.
3 Beat the egg yolks with the cream, then pour gently over the cold blackcurrant sauce.
4 Arrange the ramekins in a large circle in the cooker and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 7-8 minutes until the topping is not quite set, but is no longer runny. Move the dishes around in the cooker and turn them every 2 minutes to ensure even cooking. Cool, then refrigerate overnight.
5 About 3 hours before serving, sprinkle the tops with the caster sugar, covering them completely.
6 Cook under a hot grill until the sugar melts. Chill thoroughly before serving so that the sugar sets to form a brittle layer.

Freezer notes

If using frozen blackcurrants, thaw them at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes for 100g / 4oz fruit then use as in the recipe.

Batch cooking: chicken dishes

Batch cooking is the special privilege of the freezer owner. Pick a quiet weekend or free evening to do one large batch of chicken, divide it in four and store ready for those busier days.

With the help of a microwave cooker you can prepare a basic casserole that will make up to four meals for the family in 40-60 minutes. Divided up and frozen, a container can be quickly thawed and reheated in the microwave.

The Basic Chicken Mix here (see page 452) is cheap as well as tasty, using everyone's favourite, chicken pieces. After cooking the casserole, remove the meat from the bones, so that it will take up less space in the freezer; it will also thaw and reheat more evenly. Pack the meals either in plastic boxes or in freezer bags, turning the mixture out into a dish for thawing and reheating. If you use microwave boiling and roasting bags, the mixture can be thawed in the bag, but remember to change the metal ties for plastic ones, pieces of string or rubber bands.

Alternatively, line a casserole with foil and freeze the chicken mixture in this. When hard you can remove the foil package from the casserole and wrap it tightly in a plastic bag. To thaw, remove the plastic and foil and return the shape to the original casserole.

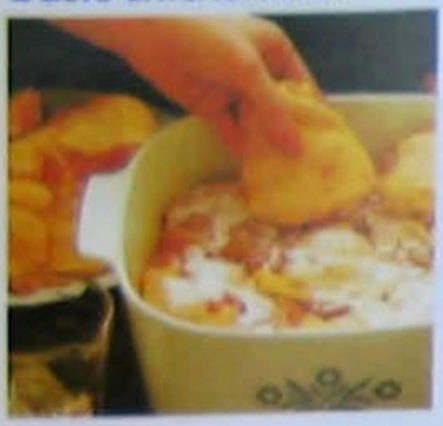
Once thawed, extra ingredients can be added to a container of the basic recipe to produce any of five meals — choosing from a quick and tasty pilaff, a traditional stew with dumplings, a filling casserole with pasta and vegetables, a tasty Italian-style spaghetti meal or a delicious paprika-seasoned chicken with soured cream.

Your freezer chicken meals can generally be thawed and ready to serve in 30 minutes. Thawing the frozen chicken mix at 50% (Medium) first before adding the new ingredients will ensure that the casserole does not over-cook and dry out.

Chicken Paprikash

DON LAST

How to microwave Basic chicken mix



Trim *excess fat from the chicken. Mix together the flour, stock cubes, and seasonings. Layer the chicken in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole, sprinkling each layer with the flour mix and vegetables.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 40-50 minutes, or until the chicken is no longer pink, turning and rearranging the pieces every 10 minutes to ensure even cooking.*

Cool *until the chicken pieces are possible to handle. Remove the meat from the bones, discarding skin. Cut into pieces and return to the sauce in the casserole. Discard the bay leaf.*

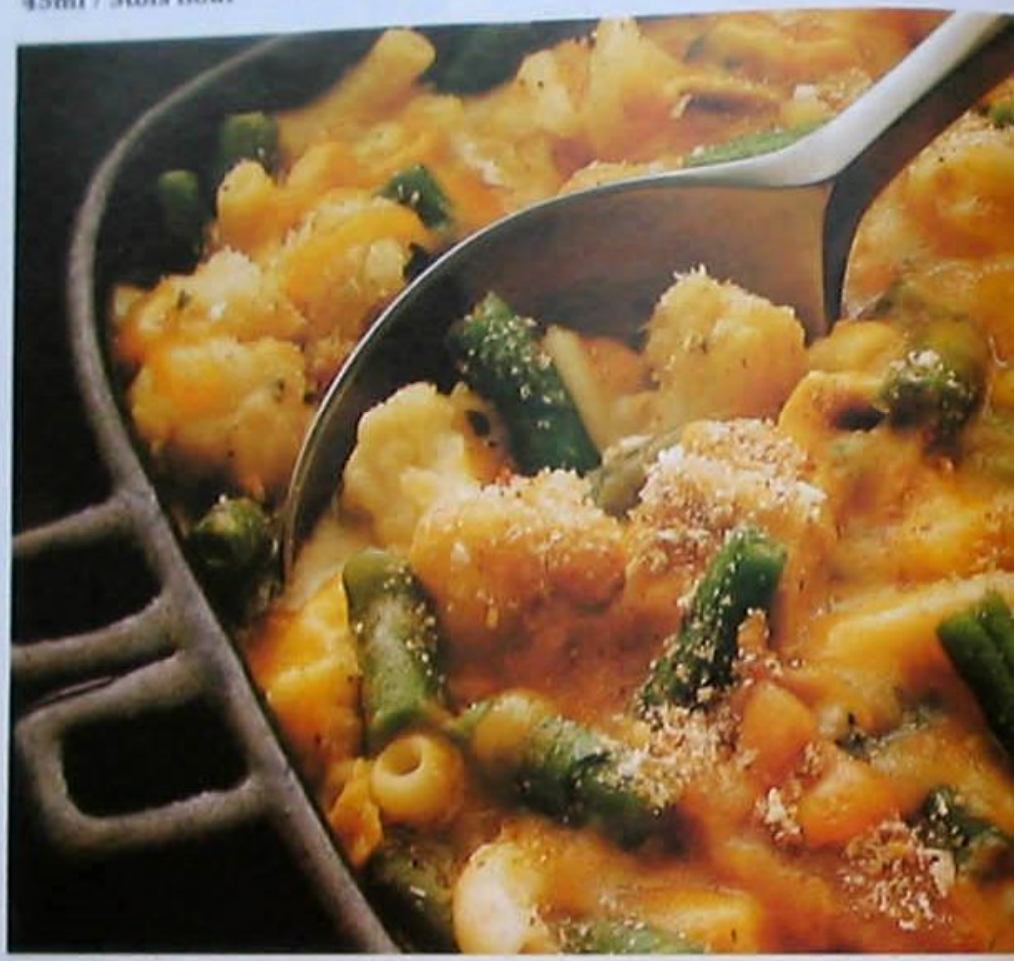
Basic chicken mix

40 mins

Standing time: none

3.6-4kg / 8-9lb chicken joints or pieces — drumsticks, thighs, split breasts or wings
45ml / 3tbls flour
2 chicken stock cubes, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls dried parsley
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
1 large bay leaf
salt and pepper
1 small carrot, very finely chopped
1 large onion, chopped

MAKES 4 CONTAINERS OF MIX



How to freeze and thaw Basic chicken mix

To freeze, *divide the mixture evenly between 4 containers or freezer bags. Cover the containers or seal the bags with plastic ties, string or rubber bands. Freeze for 3-4 months.*

To thaw, *turn the mix from 1 container into a bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 9-12 minutes, stirring 2-3 times. Let stand for 3-5 minutes.*

Chicken casserole

14 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans
225g / 8oz frozen cauliflower florets
30ml / 2tbls water
1 container Basic Chicken Mix, thawed (see opposite)
100g / 4oz wholewheat pasta shapes, cooked
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
290g / 10.2oz can cream of mushroom soup
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
5ml / 1tsp made mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the green beans, cauliflower and water in a casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes until just tender; drain. Cut any large florets into smaller pieces.
2 Stir in the chicken and remaining ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, or until heated.

Broccoli chicken over spaghetti

17½ mins

Standing time: none

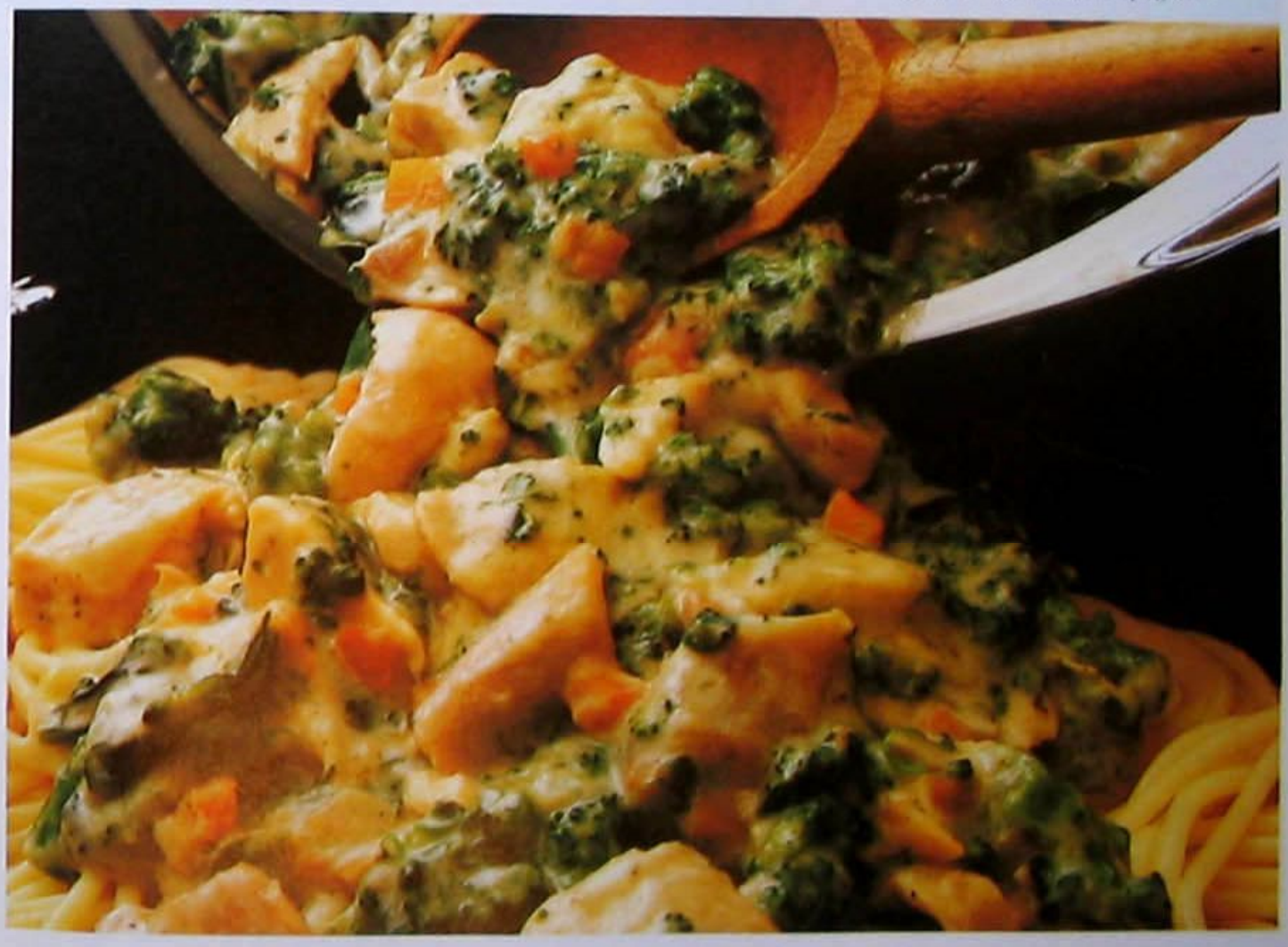
175g / 6oz spaghetti, wholewheat or white
225g / 8oz frozen broccoli spears
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp onion salt
pinch of garlic powder
salt and pepper
575ml / 1pt milk
1 container Basic Chicken Mix, thawed (see opposite)
25g / 1oz Parmesan cheese, grated

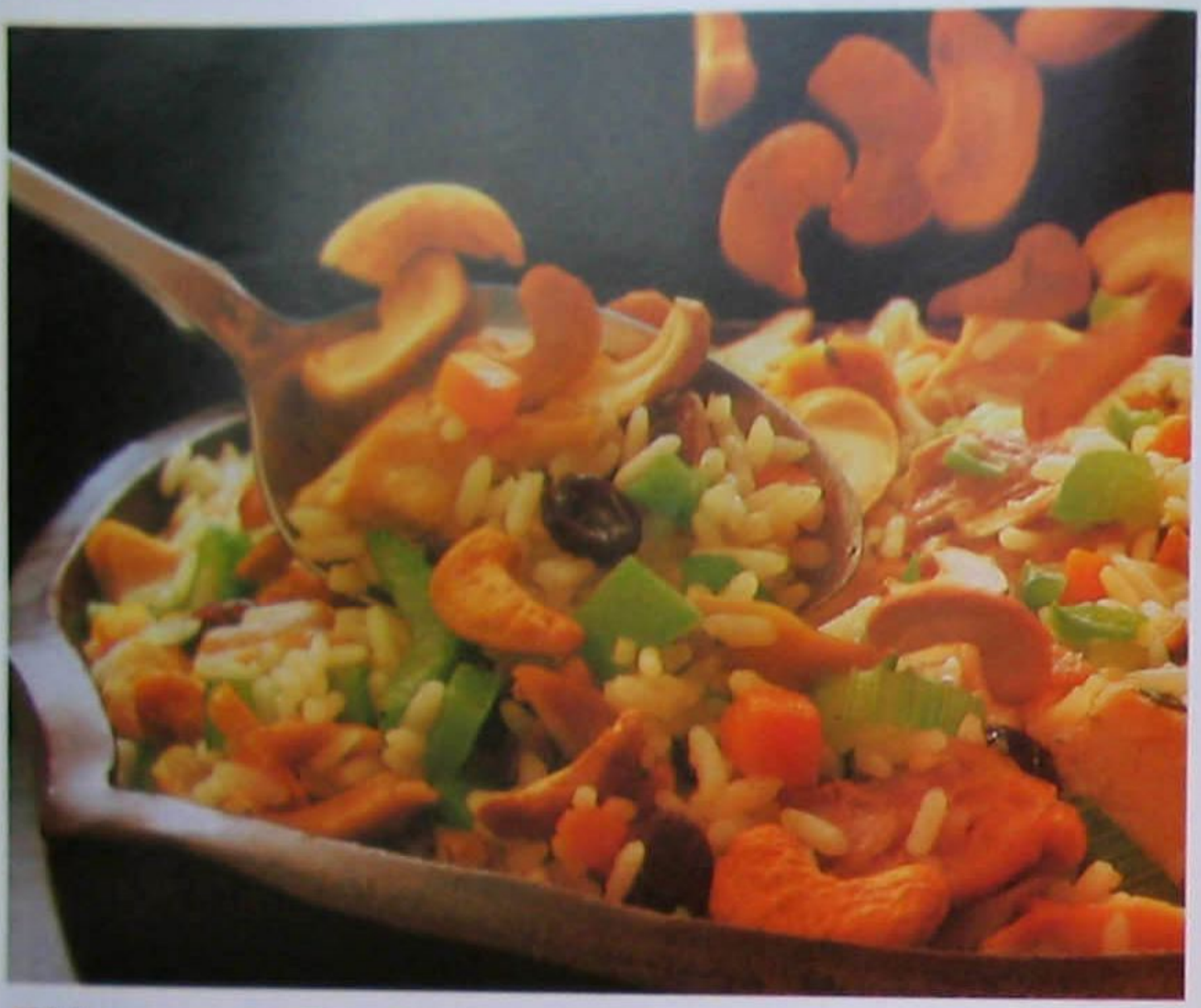
SERVES 4

1 Cook the spaghetti conventionally while making the sauce; drain immediately after cooking. Meanwhile, pierce and microwave the broccoli in the packet at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until just tender. Drain and cut the stalks into bite-sized pieces.
2 Melt the butter or margarine in a covered casserole at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Whisk in the flour, seasonings and milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes until thickened, whisking several times during the cooking. Add the broccoli and chicken mix to the sauce and stir in well.
3 Arrange the spaghetti over the base of a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish. Pour the sauce mixture over the top; sprinkle with cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until completely heated through, turning the dish once. Serve immediately with a tomato and onion salad.

Left: *Chicken Casserole*

Broccoli Chicken over Spaghetti





Chicken paprikash

7½ mins

Standing time: none

1 garlic clove, crushed
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
3-4 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 large onion, thinly sliced
knob of butter or margarine
1 container Basic Chicken Mix, thawed (see page 452)
10ml / 2tsp mild paprika
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Combine the crushed garlic, mushrooms, celery, onion and butter or margarine in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Strain off the liquid.

2 Stir in the chicken mix, paprika, sugar, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once.

3 Blend in the soured cream and check the seasoning. Reheat at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, if necessary.

Quick chicken pilaff

10½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

2 celery stalks, chopped
1 small red pepper, chopped
10ml / 2tsp olive olive
1 container Basic Chicken Mix, thawed (see page 452)
225g / 8oz easy-cook white rice
275g / 10fl oz boiling water
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls raisins
50g / 2oz roasted cashew nuts
30-45ml / 2-3tbls freshly chopped chives

SERVES 4

1 Combine the celery, pepper and oil in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes until just tender.

2 Stir in the chicken mix, rice, water, stock cube, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes until the liquid is absorbed, stirring once. Remove the bay leaf. Stir in the raisins, nuts and chives; cover. Let stand 2-3 minutes.

Quick Chicken Pilaff

Chicken stew with dumplings

26 mins

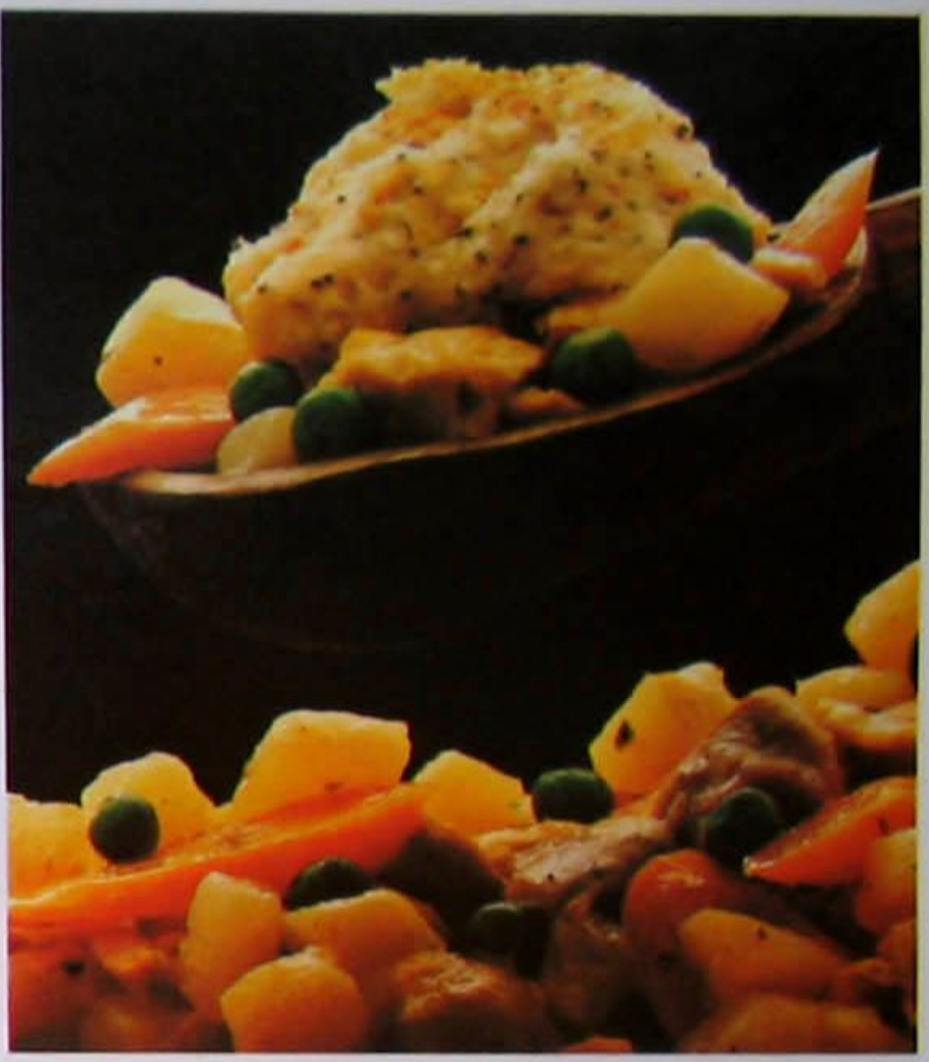
Standing time: none

STEW
1 container Basic Chicken Mix, thawed (see page 452)
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
225g / 8oz carrots, thinly sliced
1 potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
300g / 10.6oz can golden vegetable soup or chicken broth
150ml / ¼pt water
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz frozen peas

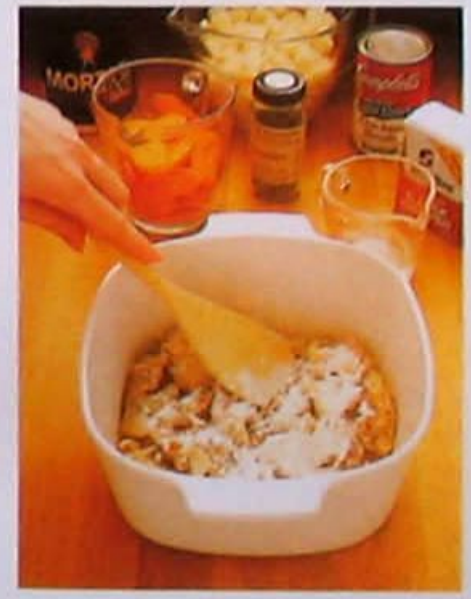
DUMPLINGS
225g / 8oz packet suet dumplings (or scone) mix
10ml / 2tsp poppy or sesame seeds
salt and pepper
water or milk and water as required to mix

GLAZE
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar

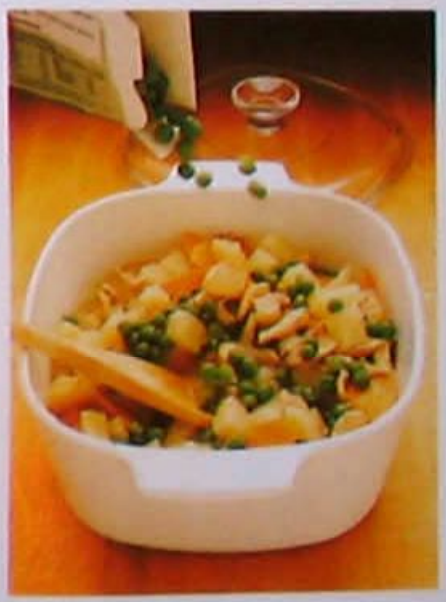
SERVES 4



How to microwave Chicken stew with dumplings



Stir *the chicken mix and flour together in a casserole. Add the remaining stew ingredients except the peas; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, stirring once.*



Add *peas, cover and microwave for 2-4 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the dumpling ingredients with liquid as directed on packet; shape into 8 balls. Mix up glaze and coat dumplings.*

Arrange *the dumplings around the stew. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the dumplings are puffed and just set; turn the casserole once. Serve immediately.*

Healthy eating 1

Eating microwave-cooked food is one of the best and easiest way of eating healthily. Taste, texture and goodness are all retained, to inspire a whole range of delicious and varied meals.

Microwave cooking is not only quick and simple — it is also good for you. It helps to retain the nutrients, which are the elements of food which the body uses to build and maintain itself.

The essentials are protein, fibre, carbohydrates, minerals, water, vitamins and fat. All these are necessary for survival and the microwave cooking method will help preserve the fundamental goodness of food and make it taste appetising as well.

Fruits and vegetables supply vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and fibre to aid digestion. These can be microwaved rapidly in a minimum of water, meaning important vitamins are conserved, not thrown away with the cooking liquid as so often happens when cooking conventionally. The fast cooking method also helps retain the real flavour of food which is important as it means those undesirable flavour enhancers, like butter, sugar and salt can be cut down or omitted entirely.

All protein foods are good cooked by microwave; fish, shellfish and poultry microwave particularly well. If you are on a low cholesterol diet, bear in mind that some protein foods such as beef,

pork, cheese or oily fish like herring or mackerel contain more fat than others.

Fats are high in calories and cholesterol and should be used sparingly. But they do contain some vitamins and enable you to utilize the nutrients from other foods — so don't cut them out completely. You do not need fat for cooking by microwave, so save your allowance for something you particularly like — such as a sliced avocado with a salad or soured cream with a baked potato. If you want to cut down on fats, use skimmed milk which contains all the nutrients of whole milk, without the fat.

Summer Layer Bake

Summer layer bake

26 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
230g / 8oz can peeled tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1.5ml / ¼tsp chopped basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp chopped oregano
pepper
225g / 8oz cottage or curd cheese
50g / 2oz low-fat Cheddar, grated
5ml / 1tsp chopped fresh parsley
3 courgettes
1 large tomato, sliced
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Combine the tomato purée, canned tomatoes, onion, basil, oregano and pepper to taste in a mixing bowl.
2 In another bowl, mix together the cottage or curd cheese, the grated low-fat Cheddar cheese and parsley.
3 Peel the courgettes and trim the ends. Slice lengthways into thin strips and arrange in a 20cm / 8in square baking dish. Cover with greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until the courgettes are tender, rearranging halfway through the cooking time. Drain and place the courgettes on absorbent paper.
5 Cool slightly, then arrange half the courgette slices in the bottom of the baking dish. Spread the cheese mixture over the courgettes, then top with the sliced tomato.
6 Spread half the tomato mixture over the sliced tomato, then add the remaining courgettes. Pour the remaining tomato mixture over and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
7 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes until the mixture is well heated through, rotating the dish a ¼ turn every 5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Per portion:
Calories: 160 / Kilojoules: 670
High in protein and low in fat
High in minerals and vitamin A

Nutrients in food saved by microwaving

FOOD	CONVENTIONAL COOKING METHOD	MICROWAVE METHOD	PERCENTAGE OF NUTRIENT SAVED
Broccoli	Boiled in 575ml / 1pt water for 6½ mins	Cooked in 45ml / 3tbls water for 5 mins	42% vitamin C
Beef patties	Grilled	Cooked through	22% vitamin B_1
Cabbage	Boiled in 575ml / 1pt water for 6½ mins	Cooked in 22.5ml / 1½tbls water for 4 mins	42% vitamin C
Frozen peas	Boiled in 150ml / ¼pt water for 6 mins	Reheated for 1 min	28% vitamin C
Apple	Baked	Heated	10% vitamin C
Gingerbread cupcakes	Baked for 25 minutes	Cooked for 1½ mins	26% vitamin B_1
Potatoes	Boiled in 150ml / ¼pt water for 18 mins	Cooked in 30ml / 2tbls water for 8 mins	5% vitamin C

Pizza potato toppers

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, about 225g / 8oz each
225g / 8oz lean mince
1 small onion, chopped
1 small pepper, chopped
1 large tomato, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup
pinch black pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
25g / 1oz low-fat Cheddar, grated

SERVES 4

Per portion:
Calories: 185 / Kilojoules: 780
High in protein
High in vitamins: C, B_{12}

Orange fruit bake

3 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

2 large bananas, halved lengthways and cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
2 large oranges, peeled and segmented
8 green grapes, halved and deseeded
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated orange zest
50ml / 2fl oz orange juice
5ml / 1tsp rum (optional)
15ml / 1tbls water
10ml / 2tsp brown sugar
low-fat natural yoghurt (optional)

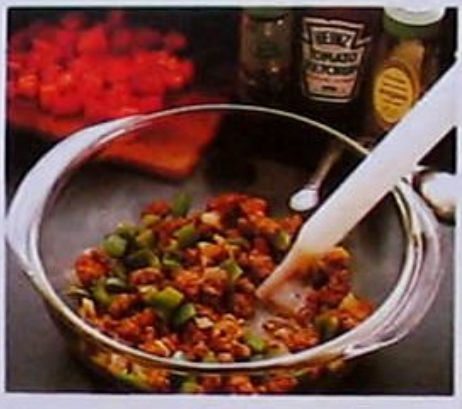
SERVES 4

1 Divide banana pieces, orange segments and grapes evenly into 4 individual ramekin dishes.
2 Combine orange zest, juice, rum, if using, and water in a cup or small jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until boiling.
3 Pour a little of the sauce into each of the dishes and stir the mixture gently to coat the fruit. Sprinkle each dish with the brown sugar. Allow the dishes to stand for 10 minutes, covered with a piece of greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until bananas begin to soften, rotating the dishes once during the cooking time. Serve warm with yoghurt if desired.

Per portion:
Calories: 110 / Kilojoules: 460
High in Vitamins: C, B_6
High in zinc

How to microwave Pizza potato toppers

Bake *potatoes as directed on page 35. Stand for 5 minutes wrapped in foil. Meanwhile prepare pizza topping. Combine mince, chopped onion and chopped pepper in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover with a loose-fitting lid or cling film, rolled back at one edge to allow steam to escape.*



Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until beef is no longer pink, stirring once. Drain and add tomato, ketchup and seasonings.*

Remove *potatoes from foil and split each in half lengthways. Place potatoes on a roasting rack and then using a fork, gently lift and flake centres so they are light and fluffy. Be careful not to damage the potato skins while you are flaking the centres.*

Spoon *meat mixture onto potatoes. Top with grated cheese and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until the cheese melts.*

DAVE KING

Baked grapefruit

3 mins

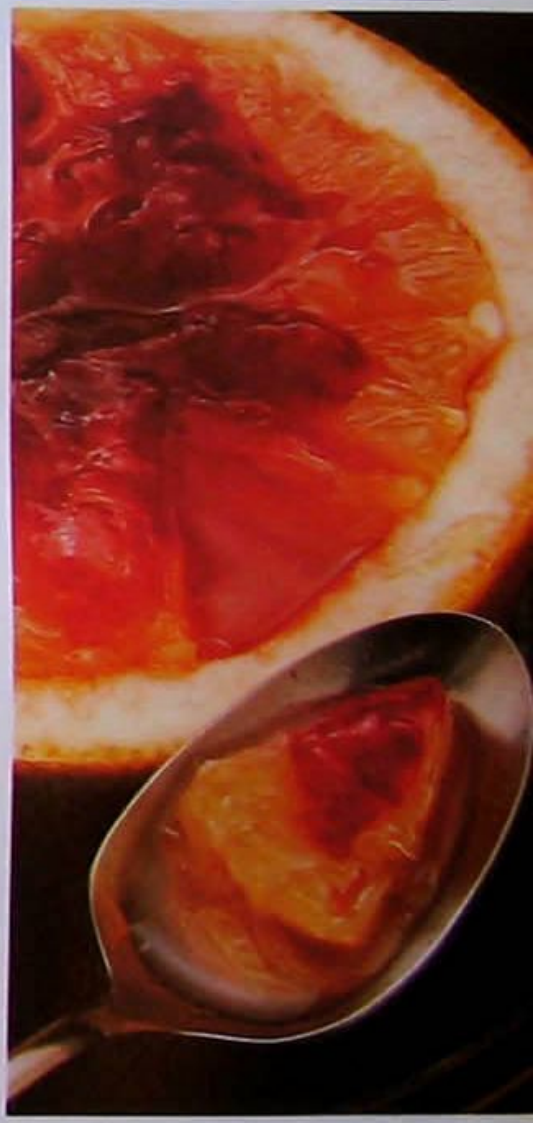
Standing time: none

2 grapefruit
20ml / 4tsp low-sugar jam
4 fresh strawberries (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cut grapefruit in half and segment with a grapefruit knife.
2 Spread with jam. Cook at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Turn once.
3 Top each with a strawberry.

Per portion:
Calories: 30 / Kilojoules: 125
High in fibre and low in fats
High in vitamin C



Left: *Pizza Potato Topper*
Above: *Baked Grapefruit*

Sunday brunch

Brunch is a splendid institution — a leisurely blend of breakfast and lunch which hosts can enjoy with the guests with the help of a microwave: serve all the dishes at once as a help-yourself buffet.

At any time of year a brunch party is a thoroughly enjoyable gathering. Serve it in the garden on a hot summer's morning, or indoors in a comfortable dining room with a roaring fire.

There are many advantages to holding brunch parties — on a time basis, you can start at any hour which seems right for breakfast, and end at an hour when a late lunch might finish. As timing is so flexible, the dishes are too — serve light breakfast-style foods accompanied by more substantial meat and fish dishes, and finish with a sweet course.

The microwave is a perfect partner in producing this choice of dishes. Prepare and reheat the food using the microwave, and you can keep a supply of freshly toasted muffins or fresh bread at the table to accompany the savoury dishes.

Plenty of fresh coffee and tea is a must — but a special cold drink such as Buck's Fizz adds sparkle to the party atmosphere. Serve the champagne or sparkling wine chilled, allowing guests to add their own orange juice to taste. (For cold days, a spicy Bloody Mary makes a good warmer).

The fruit salad rounds the meal off well — add a little sherry or brandy for a different flavour, and serve with thick yoghurt or cream.

DAVE KING

Countdown

The day before
Microwave the Dried Fruit Salad and the rice and haddock for the kedgeree and refrigerate, covered, overnight.

Early morning on the day
Cook the eggs for the kedgeree and then assemble the dish with all the other ingredients. Prepare and microwave the kidneys and set aside, covered.

Chill the champagne and orange juice for the Buck's Fizz.

Scoop out the centres of the tomatoes and leave to drain in a dish lined with absorbent paper.

Half an hour before serving
Wipe tomatoes and add the eggs and topping. Assemble the Bacon and Mushroom Rolls.

Heat the kedgeree by microwaving, covered, at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring once. Stand covered while you microwave the kidneys, also covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Leave to stand.

Microwave the Tomato Stuffed Eggs and the Bacon and Mushroom Rolls. Serve all the dishes on a large table at the same time, so that guests are able to help themselves.

MENU

Devilled Kidneys
A classic breakfast dish, full of flavour

Haddock and Prawn Kedgeree
Fluffy rice and fish with a hint of curry

Tomato Stuffed Eggs
Cheese-topped eggs baked in tomato cups

Bacon and Mushroom Rolls
Bacon-wrapped mushroom caps with avocado

Dried Fruit Salad
Tender mixed fruits in natural juice

SERVES 8

Devilled kidneys

13 mins

Standing time: none

8 lamb's kidneys
25g / 1oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
30ml / 2tbls dry sherry
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley

SERVES 8

1 Slice the kidneys in half and cut away the core using scissors. Pat dry on absorbent paper.
2 Place the butter and onion in a small dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes.
3 Stir in the kidneys and season to taste. Cover and cook for 4 minutes at 100% (High).
4 Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, sherry and parsley. Leave uncovered and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
5 Stir well, then serve with hot buttered toast.

Drinks for a brunch party

Buck's fizz
This is traditionally a mixture of champagne and orange juice, but if serving it in volume, a dry white sparkling wine is just as good.

In order to enjoy the taste of the wine, it should be mixed with slightly less than its own volume of orange juice. People often prefer to mix their own in the proportions they like.

Allow at least ½ bottle of champagne or wine per person and chill it and the orange juice thoroughly before you serve it. A large bucket of ice is ideal to keep bottles cool during the party.

Bloody Mary
This is a great brunch time starter — a spiced blend of vodka and tomato juice with an assortment of extras which make it special.

To a measure of vodka add 3 or 4 measures of tomato juice and a generous dash of Worcestershire sauce, a slice of lemon and plenty of ice. For a connoisseur's cocktail, add Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper and celery salt to taste and mix thoroughly.

Many cocktail bars serve Bloody Marys with a garnish of celery leaves or a stick of celery as a stirrer.

Haddock and prawn kedgeree

40 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz long-grain rice
400ml / 14fl oz boiling water
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
knob of butter
350g / 12oz smoked haddock
25g / 1oz butter
2 eggs
1 onion, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp curry powder
175g / 6oz peeled prawns defrosted if frozen
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
lemon wedges to garnish

SERVES 8

1 Combine the rice, boiling water and salt together with a knob of butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 12 minutes, stirring several times. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.
3 Place the haddock in a shallow dish, overlapping the thinner edges slightly to give an even thickness of fish.
4 Dot with half the butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes.
5 Leave to cool, then flake the flesh and remove any bones.
6 Break the eggs into individual ramekin dishes and break the yolks with a cocktail stick. Add 15ml / 1tbls hot water to each egg.
7 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes, or until the eggs are just set. Drain off any excess liquid and allow to cool.
8 Put onion and remaining butter in a large dish. Cover and cook at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes. Stir in the curry and rice and mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes to heat through. Chop the eggs and stir in with fish, prawns and parsley.
9 Cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, stirring once during cooking and again before serving.

Buck's Fizz

DAVE KING

Tomato stuffed eggs

5 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

8 large tomatoes
salt and pepper
8 small eggs
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, finely grated
watercress, to garnish

SERVES 8

1 Cut the tops off the tomatoes, and scoop out the seeds and pulp.
2 Lightly sprinkle the insides of the tomatoes with salt and place upside down in a dish lined with absorbent paper to drain.
3 Wipe the insides of the tomatoes, season with pepper and break an egg into each.
4 Sprinkle with grated cheese, and arrange in a circle on a large dish.
5 Cover the dish, then microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the eggs are just set. Stand for 4-5 minutes; garnish with watercress before serving.

Bacon and mushroom rolls

5 mins

Standing time: none

8 thin slices of back bacon
16 button mushrooms
1 small avocado
pepper

SERVES 8

1 Remove the rind from the bacon and cut each slice in half lengthways. Stretch the bacon a little using a knife so that it will be easier to wrap.
2 Remove the stems from the mushrooms and remove the stone and skin from the avocado; keep the flesh in two halves.
3 Cut the avocado flesh into 16 pieces and place one in each of the mushroom cups.
4 Season each mushroom and avocado lightly with pepper.
5 Wrap a piece of bacon around each filled mushroom. Arrange the rolls on a roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes.

Dried Fruit Salad

Dried fruit salad

16 mins

Standing time: 60 mins

450g / 1lb dried fruit salad (apple, apricot, prune, pear)
575ml / 1pt unsweetened fruit juice (orange or pineapple)
575ml / 1pt water
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar

SERVES 8

1 Place the fruit in a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole with the fruit juice and water.
2 Cover with a lid or cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring once or twice during cooking.
3 Leave to stand and cool for 1 hour. During this time the fruit should tenderize.
4 Stir in the sugar, then cover again and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes.
5 Leave to cool, then chill before serving.

Quick crêpe fillings

Deliciously thin and delicate crêpes, made in the French style, are an excellent standby for the busy microwave cook who needs to provide a meal in a hurry.

Crêpes are pancakes made in the French style, using an enriched batter to give thin, light and delicious pancakes that will provide the ideal wrapping for many savoury and sweet fillings.

For the busy cook who has to provide a speedy meal — however plain or fancy — crêpes can sometimes be bought ready-made from delicatessens and specialist food shops. Alternatively, make and freeze your own crêpes.

Although crêpes cannot be made in the microwave — they are cooked conventionally over direct heat — the microwave is invaluable for quickly thawing frozen crêpes and reheating all manner of pancakes dishes — in a matter of minutes. Try them served simply with a sprinkling of lemon juice and sugar, or turn them into a tasty family meal or supper party dish — whatever the occasion, crêpes are always popular.

Strawberry Crêpes

Basic crêpes

½ mins

Standing time: none

These conventionally cooked crêpes can be reheated in 2 batches in the microwave for 45 seconds when they are all cooked.

150g / 5oz plain flour, sifted
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
1 large egg, beaten
60ml / 4tbls water
275ml / 10fl oz milk
15ml / 1tbls oil
oil for frying

MAKES 16

1 Put the flour and salt into a bowl and add the beaten egg. Using a balloon whisk or a wooden spoon, smoothly blend in the water and half the milk; beat well until completely smooth. Stir in the oil, then cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Mix in remaining milk to make the batter the consistency of single cream.

2 Thinly coat the base of a 15cm / 6in frying pan with oil. Heat pan on a conventional cooker until piping hot. Add about 30ml / 2tbls batter and quickly swirl around to evenly coat the base of pan. Cook over a medium to high heat until the crêpe is set all over and tiny

bubbles appear in the centre. Turn over and cook other side until lightly golden.

3 Transfer cooked crêpe to a plate. Repeat step 2 until all the batter has been used. The cooked crêpes will cool while the remainder are being cooked.

4 To serve hot: stack 8 crêpes on a plate, cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds-1 minute.

VARIATION

Brown crêpes: Substitute 30ml / 2tbls of the flour with 30ml /2tbls plain wholewheat flour in the Basic crêpes recipe (left).

Strawberry crêpes

5¾ mins

Standing time: none

20ml / 4tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
175ml / 6fl oz water
75g / 3oz sugar
450-700g / 1-1½lb fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced
30-45ml / 2-3tbls Cointreau or orange juice
1-2 drops red food colouring (optional)
8 crêpes (see Basic Crêpes recipe, left)

SERVES 4

1 In a small bowl, smoothly blend the cornflour with the lemon juice then stir in the water, sugar and 50g / 2oz of the sliced strawberries. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes until the sauce thickens and clears, stirring once. Stir in the Cointreau or orange juice and food colouring, if using. Stir in the strawberries and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until heated through.

2 Reheat the crêpes, following the instructions given in Basic Crêpes recipe, step 4. Divide the strawberry filling between the crêpes and fold over edges neatly. Serve with whipped cream.

Cook's notes

The glossy sauce makes the strawberries sweet and moist to eat. For a change, stir an equal proportion of soured cream or natural yoghurt into the whipped cream and sprinkle with nuts.

Freezer notes

Arrange cold crêpes in two batches of eight, interleaving them with greaseproof paper. Pack into freezer bags. Freeze for up to 2 months.

How to thaw crêpes in the microwave

Remove *the crêpes, a stack of 8 at a time, from the bag. Either place directly on cooker floor or on a plate. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes, turning once until crêpes no longer feel icy.*

Allow *crêpes to stand for 5 minutes. Peel the top and bottom crêpes away from the stack. If the centre crêpes are still frozen, return them to the microwave for a further 20-30 seconds at 50% (Medium).*

Chicken crêpes

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz fresh asparagus
125ml / 4fl oz water
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp chicken seasoning
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt milk
225g / 8oz cooked chicken, diced
8 crêpes (see Basic Crêpes, page 464)
15-30ml / 1-2tbls milk
30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS

A 225g / 8oz packet of frozen broccoli spears may be used instead of the asparagus. Place the frozen broccoli spears in a bowl with 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, then drain, chop coarsely and add to the sauce with the sliced mushrooms and the cooked, diced chicken.

For a more everyday dish, frozen, cut green beans can replace the asparagus or broccoli, if liked.

How to microwave Chicken crêpes

Discard *the tough ends of the asparagus, then cut asparagus into 2.5cm / 1in pieces and put into a 1.7L / 3pt bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until tender but still crisp, stirring halfway through. Drain, add mushrooms, cover and set aside.*

Place *onion in a measuring jug with butter. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Mix in flour with the chicken seasoning and the stock cube. Add seasoning and blend in milk. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring twice during cooking.*

Reserve *30ml / 2tbls sauce; add rest to vegetables and stir in chicken. Divide between crêpes; roll up and put in a rectangular dish. Thin reserved sauce with milk and spoon over crêpes. Add nuts; cover. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 12 minutes, turn once. Stand 5 minutes.*

DAVE KING

Matador crêpes

8 mins

Standing time: none

125g / 4oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls fresh white breadcrumbs
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
15ml / 1tbls tomato sauce
90ml / 6tbls milk
1 garlic clove, crushed (optional)
salt and pepper
4 crêpes (see Basic Crêpes, page 464)
4 slices ham
2 tomatoes, thinly sliced

SERVES 2 AS MAIN MEAL OR 4 AS A SNACK OR APPETIZER

1 Combine the cheese, breadcrumbs, onion, flour, mustard, tomato sauce and milk in a bowl. Mix together to form a thick paste. Stir in the garlic, if using, and seasoning.

2 Place the crêpes on a flat surface and cover one half of each with a slice of ham. Divide the cheese mixture between the crêpes, spreading it to coat the ham. Arrange 2 slices of tomato on top of each.

3 Fold pancakes in half to cover the filling and arrange in a shallow rectangular dish. Microwave, uncovered at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes until piping hot, rotating the dish once. Serve hot.

Freezer notes

Open-freeze stuffed crêpes until solid; cover, label and freeze for 1 month. To serve: arrange crêpes in a shallow dish without overlapping. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes.

Cook's notes

Unfilled crêpes can be stored in the refrigerator for 3 days. Ensure crêpes are cold before stacking and packing in an airtight plastic bag, or wrapping in foil, or they may become tough and rubbery when reheated.

Shellfish 1

Delicious and elegant, prawns, shrimps and mussels make succulent eating when cooked the microwave way. Try the French classic Moules Marinière or the dunk-and-dip again cocktail appetizer, Prawn Dip.

Tightly covered and microwave steamed these delicious shellfish retain their unique flavour and texture.

For best results when cooking and thawing, arrange peeled prawns and shrimps in a circle in a large shallow dish and rotate or stir once during the short cooking or reheating time. After the standing time the flesh will turn from translucent to opaque. Cook for the minimum time to begin with since overcooking will dry and toughen the flesh.

The difference between shrimps and prawns in Europe is mainly one of size. Shrimps tend to be tiny, prawns slightly bigger.

When you are preparing fresh mussels, they really should be cooked and eaten on the day of purchase. Do be careful of any dead mussels in the batch as they go off very quickly — check them by tapping any open shells and discarding any which do not close immediately.

Moules Marinière

Moules marinière

12½ mins

Standing time: none

This is a classic French dish which is a particular speciality of Brittany. Serve in soup bowls, providing another bowl for the empty shells.

1.5kg / 3¼lb mussels
40g / 1½oz butter
1 small onion or 2 shallots, very finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
200ml / 7fl oz dry white wine or dry cider
salt and pepper
parsley sprig, to garnish

SERVES 3-4

1 Discard any open mussels that do not close immediately when tapped. Pull away the beards, then scrub clean, (see steps below).
2 Put the butter, onion or shallots, garlic, parsley and thyme in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
3 Add the flour, wine or cider and salt and pepper to taste, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring twice.
4 Add half the prepared mussels and toss in the sauce. Cover with cling film and cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.
5 Remove the mussels with a slotted spoon and place in a heated serving dish. Discard any mussels that have not opened.
6 Add the remaining mussels to the sauce in the bowl and toss well to coat them with the cooking liquor. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½ minutes, stirring once. Discard any mussels that have not opened.
7 Spoon the newly cooked mussels and sauce into the serving dish with the other mussels. Garnish with parsley, and serve.

How to prepare and microwave mussels

Check *that the mussels are fresh — tap any open mussels and if they do not shut at once, discard them. Pull away the beards — any seaweed gripped between the two shells.*

Using *a small nail brush scrub the mussel shells one by one, under cold running water. Scrape away any encrustations with a sharp knife, then rinse the mussels thoroughly again.*

Drain *the mussels and weigh into 700g / 1½lb portions. Place one portion in a large bowl with 75ml / 3fl oz water, white wine or cider, a bouquet garni and season to taste.*

Cover *the dish with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring the mussels once, halfway through the cooking time.*

After *this cooking time the mussel shells should have opened — if any are still closed; discard them. Transfer the mussels to a serving dish, reserving the cooking liquor.*

Use *the liquor to cook any remaining mussels, in 700g / 1½lb batches. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½ minutes, stirring once. If wished, remove half the mussel shell to serve.*

How to peel cooked prawns and shrimps

Hold *the body of the prawn securely and twist to pull the head off.*

Using *your fingers pull the legs up over the body of the prawn.*

Pinch *the tail firmly and pull the body out of the shell in one piece.*

Freezer notes

When you buy or catch fresh prawns or shrimps you must cook or freeze them on the same day.

- *Put 450g / 1lb unpeeled fresh prawns or shrimps in a large shallow dish with 575ml / 1pt water, 1 bay leaf and 15ml / 1tbls vinegar to reduce cooking odours. Cover tightly with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes. Stir once. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes. For 900g / 2lb fresh prawns or shrimps, increase the cooking time by 2 minutes. Stir twice.*
- *Drain and cool quickly. Twist off the heads leaving the tails in the shells. Freeze for up to 1 month.*
- *Thaw 450g / 1lb cooked prawns or shrimps at 20-30% (Defrost) for 7-8 minutes, stirring twice.*

How to microwave Prawns in garlic butter

Melt *the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Blend in garlic powder and parsley. Place prawns in a large shallow dish.*

Pour *the butter mixture over, cover with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir 3 times. Stand 1-1½ minutes.*

Prawns in garlic butter

6½ mins

Standing time: 1-1½mins

Substitute frozen peeled prawns for fresh ones; follow the recipe but microwave in butter mixture for 6 minutes.

50g / 2oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic powder
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley or 10ml / 2tsp dried parsley
450g / 1lb cooked peeled prawns

SERVES 4

Spicy prawns

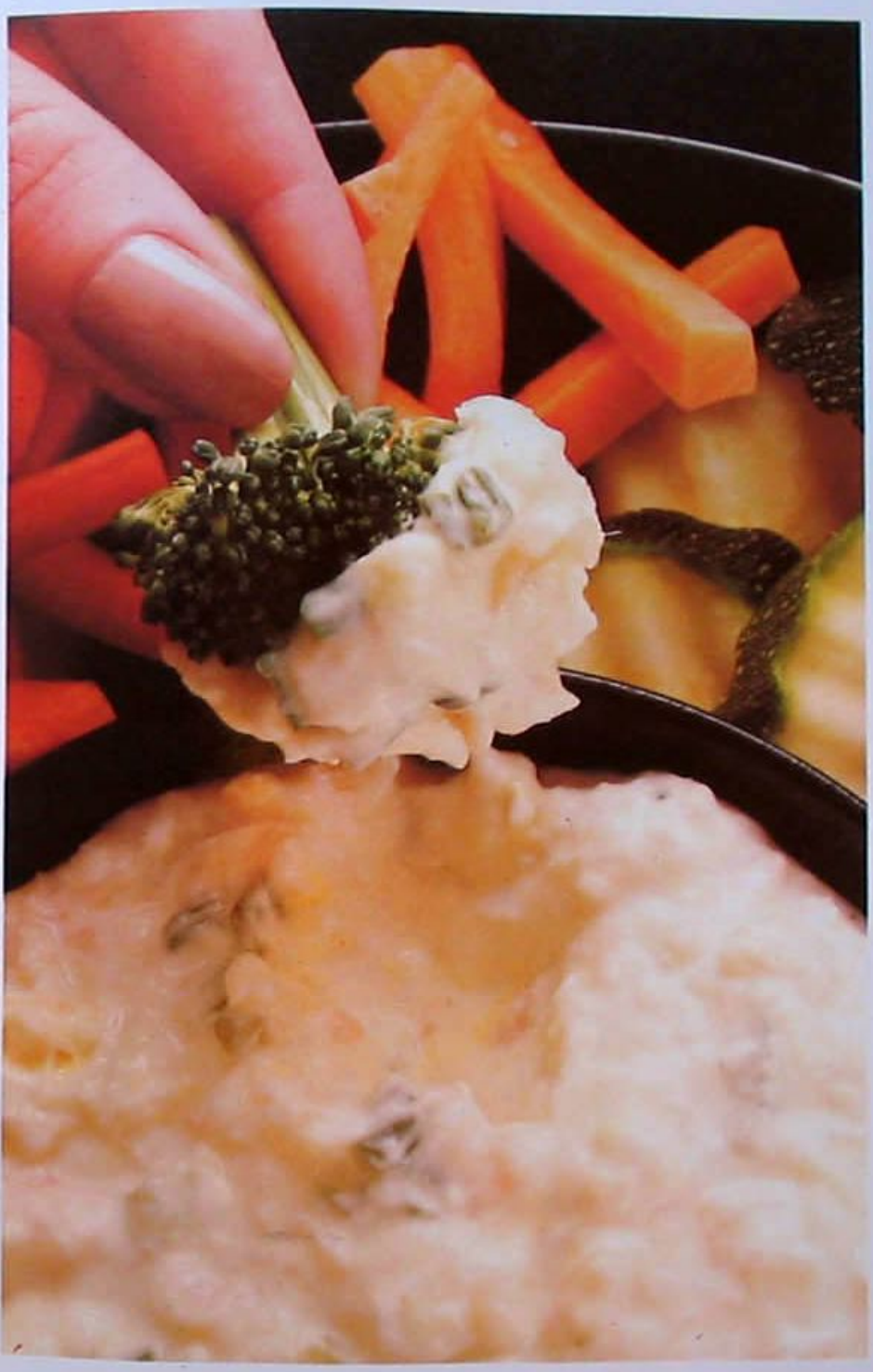
4 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

450g / 1lb cooked peeled prawns, drained or 450g / 1lb packet frozen peeled prawns, thawed
45ml / 3tbls dry white wine
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper
pinch of dried tarragon
5ml / 1tsp finely chopped red pepper
1 small bay leaf

SERVES 5

1 Put the prawns, wine, garlic, parsley and seasoning in a large bowl. Add the tarragon, pepper, and bay leaf, blending well.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir once.
3 Leave to stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes before serving. Serve hot or chill and serve as part of a salad.



Prawn dip

1 min

Standing time: none

3 spring onions, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
15g / ½oz butter
200g / 7oz cooked peeled prawns, drained and chopped
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped (optional)
5ml / 1tsp made English mustard
pinch of cayenne pepper
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
100ml / 4fl oz milk

SERVES 8

1 Microwave the spring onions, celery and butter at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir once.
2 Blend in the prawns, eggs, if using, mustard and cayenne.
3 In a blender or food processor, blend the cottage cheese with the milk until smooth, or beat with a wooden spoon. Stir into the prawn mixture. Serve lightly chilled.

Left: *Prawn Dip*

DAVE KING

Moules provençal

29½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3¼lb mussels
450g / 1lb unsmoked streaky bacon, rinds removed, cut into strips
75ml / 3fl oz dry cider
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese

TOMATO SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
2 small onions, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 large tomatoes, skinned and chopped
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Discard any open mussels that do not close immediately when tapped. Pull away the beards then scrub, clean and drain the mussels.
2 To make the tomato sauce, put the oil, onions, garlic, tomatoes, bay leaf and seasoning in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until the onion is tender, stirring twice. Set aside.
3 Place the bacon on 3 sheets of absorbent paper and cover with more absorbent paper to prevent spattering. Microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes, rotating ½ turn once. Leave to stand while cooking the mussels.
4 Put the cider and half of the mussels in a large bowl. Cover with cling film and cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.
5 Transfer the mussels with a slotted spoon to a serving dish. Discard any that have not opened.
6 Add remaining mussels to the reserved cooking liquor. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½ minutes; stir once. Discard any that have not opened
7 Transfer with a slotted spoon to the serving dish. Sprinkle with the bacon, parsley and Parmesan.
8 Discard bay leaf from the tomato sauce and pour over the mussels. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Garnish with extra chopped parsley.

Peaches, nectarines, apricots

These luscious fruits cook to perfection in the microwave. In compotes, cakes and pies, their succulent flavour and texture tastes better than ever. Tempt family and friends with these irresistible desserts.

Fruit cooks beautifully in the microwave, enhancing flavours to the full and tenderizing the flesh. Peaches, nectarines and apricots are no exception. Whether ripe or slightly underripe, the microwave will soften the fruit and bring out all the natural flavours.

Poaching soft fruit is the most successful method of cooking them. And, in the microwave, this means using the minimum of water, so that the natural goodness and colour are retained.

Peaches, nectarines and apricots are all summer fruits, but canned or frozen varieties are available throughout the year and may be used as a substitute, if necessary. Peaches and nectarines are interchangeable in recipes.

Fresh Peach Soufflé

ALAN BUNS

How to select peaches, nectarines and apricots

Peaches *should have a fruity aroma, be creamy or yellow behind their blush, and yield to slight pressure. Avoid greenish or wrinkled peaches and those with brown spots, which indicate rapidly spreading decay.*

Nectarines *are yellow-orange between the blushed areas. Select smooth, unblemished, firm fruit with slight softening along the seam. Avoid hard, dull, shrivelled or soft fruit with skin cracks or punctures.*

Apricots *range in colour from yellow to orange or red. They should be slightly soft to the touch, but not bruised or mushy. Avoid very firm, greenish fruit as they tend not to ripen after being picked from the trees.*

How to store peaches, nectarines and apricots

Keep *peaches and nectarines at room temperature until they are soft enough to eat, then store them in an open container in the bottom of the refrigerator. Use as soon as possible.*

Refrigerate *apricots in an open container in the crisper at the bottom of the refrigerator immediately after buying, and use within 2-3 days. Using a container to store the fruit prevents it from rolling when the drawer is opened and avoids light bruising. If eating fresh, remove from the refrigerator 2-3 hours before serving to bring to room temperature.*

How to peel peaches, nectarines and apricots

Measure *700ml / 1¼pt water into a 1.1L / 2pt dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, or until the water boils. Alternatively, boil the water in a kettle conventionally.*

Place *3 peaches, 3 nectarines or 6-8 apricots in the hot water. Let the fruit stand in the water for 1-2½ minutes to loosen the skins. Peel unripe nectarines with a vegetable peeler.*

Remove *the fruit and immerse in cold water. The skin will peel away easily. To skin more fruit, reheat the water to boiling and repeat the process until they are all peeled.*

Spiced apricots

10 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls sugar
275ml / ½pt apricot purée (see Microtips below)
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
large pinch of ground cloves
8 fresh apricots, peeled (see opposite), halved and pitted

SERVES 4-6

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt casserole, combine the cornflour and sugar. Stir in the apricot purée, cinnamon and ground cloves. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute.
2 Stir in the apricots. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the fruit is fork tender, stirring after half the time.
3 Serve hot or cold with whipped cream or plain yoghurt, if wished.

VARIATION
Make up the purée using peaches or nectarines, adding three fresh ones in place of the fresh apricots.

Microtips

To purée 450g / 1lb peaches, nectarines or apricots, slice and pit the desired fruit. This is the equivalent of four to five peaches and nectarines, depending on their size, and ten apricots. There is no need to peel off the skins as the fruit is sieved to form a purée.

Place the slices in a bowl. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge or a loose-fitting lid and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once during the cooking time. Stir after cooking, then leave to stand for 3 minutes. Sieve the fruit, using a nylon sieve, until completely smooth; 450g / 1lb fruit will produce 275ml / ½pt purée.

The purée is ready to use in recipes, see Spiced Apricots above, or add 15ml / 1-2tbls sugar and serve with ice cream.

Nectarine or peach pie

16 mins

Standing time: none

6 nectarines or peaches, sliced
7.5ml / 1½tsp lemon juice
75g / 3oz light brown soft sugar
75g / 3oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
23cm / 9in cooked Pastry Case (see page 370)

TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz light brown soft sugar
50g / 2oz cornflakes, slightly crushed

MAKES 23cm / 9in PIE

1 Toss the nectarines or peaches with the lemon juice. Stir in the sugars, flour and cinnamon. Turn the mixture into the pastry case.
2 Place in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until the filling is bubbling in the centre, rotating the pie ¼ turn every 3 minutes during microwaving.
3 Melt the butter or margarine in a medium bowl at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Mix in the brown sugar and crushed cornflakes. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the pie. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until completely heated through.

Fresh peach crisp

8 mins

Standing time: none

8 fresh peaches, sliced
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
100g / 4oz granulated or brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg

TOPPING
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, melted
75g / 3oz light brown soft sugar
65g / 2½oz plain flour
75ml / 5tbls quick cook rolled oats

SERVES 8

1 In a medium bowl, toss the peaches with the lemon juice. Add the sugar, flour and nutmeg. Stir to combine and pour into an 850ml / 1½pt casserole.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the peaches are tender and the sauce is clear and thickened. Set aside.
3 In a small bowl, combine the topping ingredients well. Scatter mixture over the peaches. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until hot and bubbling, turning the dish once.
4 Serve warm or cold, plain or topped with whipped cream.

Nectarine or Peach Pie

Peach upside-down cake

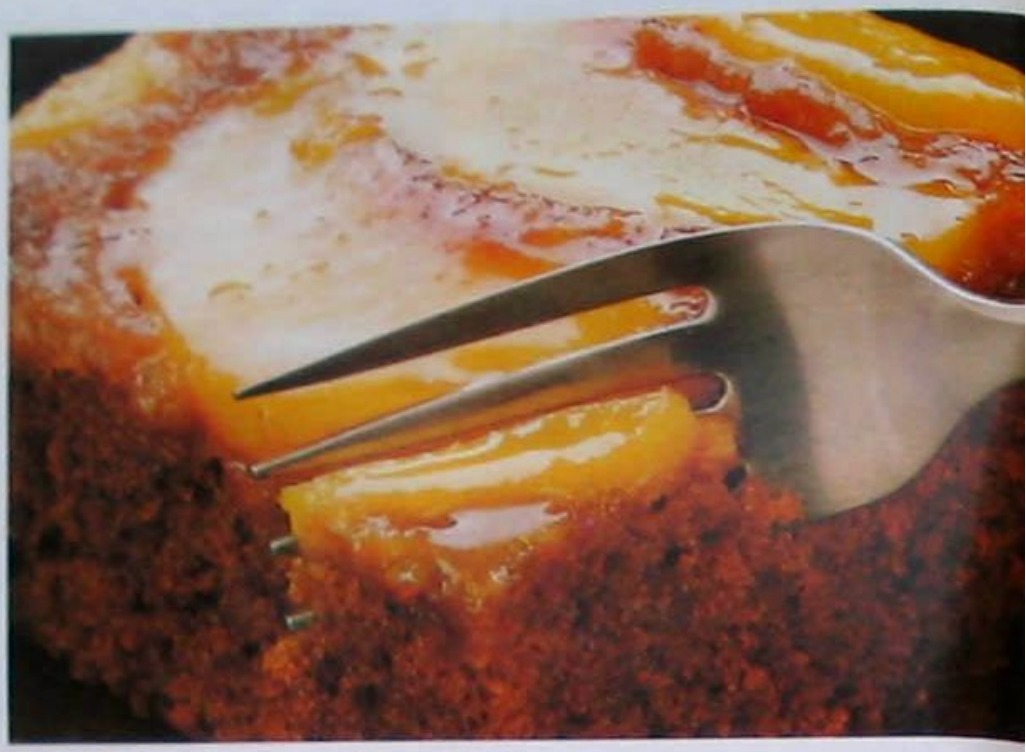
12½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls milk
4 peaches, peeled and sliced

GINGERBREAD
75g / 3oz light brown soft sugar
100g / 4oz margarine, softened
2 eggs
45ml / 3tbls treacle
45ml / 3tbls golden syrup
100g / 4oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
7.5ml / 1½tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

MAKES A 20cm / 8in SQUARE CAKE



How to microwave Peach upside-down cake

Melt *butter in a 20 × 20cm / 8 × 8in dish at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Blend in sugar and milk. Microwave for 1½-2 minutes, stir once.*

Arrange *the peaches on the mixture. Prepare gingerbread by blending all ingredients at low speed for about 1-2 minutes. Spoon over the fruit.*

Place *the dish on an inverted saucer. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 6 minutes, rotating ¼ turn every 3 minutes.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the gingerbread springs back when touched, rotating the dish ¼ turn every 2 minutes.*

Leave *the cake to cool for 5 minutes. Loosen the edges well with a knife before turning out onto a large platter and cutting into squares.*

Serve *portions of the cake while still warm as a pudding, topped with whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream, or serve cold.*

Summer fruit compote

15 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz sugar
275ml / ½pt water
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls Amaretto liqueur
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
4 peaches, peeled (see page 474), halved and stoned
4 nectarines, peeled, halved and stoned
450g / 1lb apricots, peeled, halved and stoned
50g / 2oz blanched almonds

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine the sugar, water, lemon juice, 30ml / 2tbls Amaretto and zest. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes.
2 Add the halved fruit, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes. Chill.
3 Sprinkle with the reserved Amaretto and almonds to serve.

Peach flambé

5¾ mins

Standing time: none

45ml / 3tbls sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
75g / 3oz apricot jam
65ml / 2½fl oz water
5 peaches, peeled (see page 474), sliced and stoned
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls brandy

SERVES 5-6

1 Combine the sugar and cornflour. Stir in the jam and water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until slightly thickened; stir two to three times.
2 Combine the peaches and lemon juice. Add to the thickened sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes; stir once.
3 Heat the brandy in an ovenproof glass jug at 100% (High) for 20 seconds to warm. Stir into the peaches or, to flambé, ignite and pour over the dessert.

Peach Flambé

Fresh peach soufflé

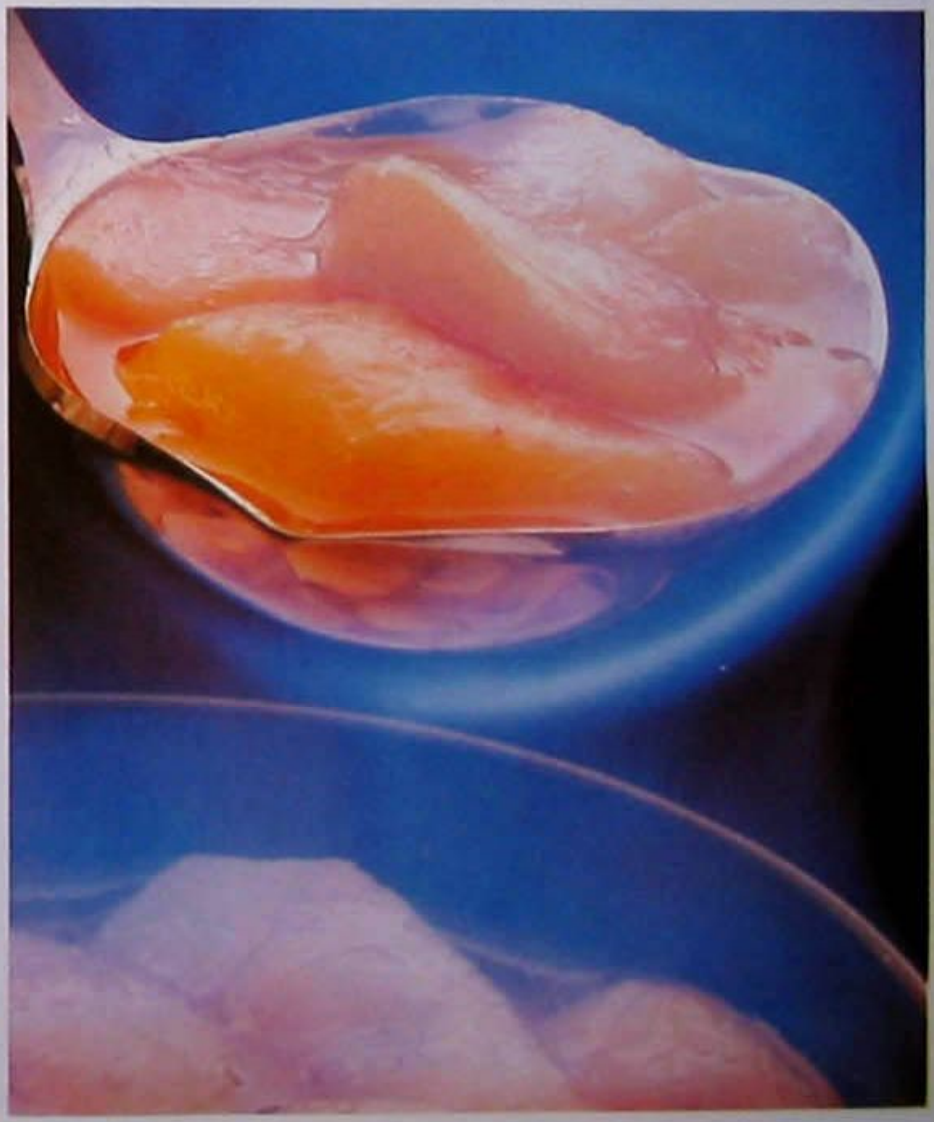
5¼ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb fresh peaches, peeled (see page 474) and sliced
15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
125ml / 4fl oz orange juice
22.5ml / 1½tbls lemon juice
275ml / ½pt double cream
2 large egg whites
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
angelica, to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Tie a collar of lightly oiled greaseproof paper round an 850ml / 1½pt soufflé dish so it extends 5-7cm / 2-3in above the rim.
2 Place the peach slices in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring once. Stir and let stand 3 minutes. Purée the flesh until smooth.
3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a cup; allow to soak for 5 minutes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds or until completely dissolved.
4 Combine the peach purée, orange and lemon juice in a bowl. Stir in the gelatine well. Chill for 30-45 minutes to allow to thicken slightly.
5 In a bowl, whip the cream until standing in soft peaks; set aside. Whisk the egg whites until standing in soft peaks; whisk in the sugar.
6 Fold the beaten egg mixture into the peach purée together with half the whipped cream. Pour into the soufflé dish. Level the surface and chill for 3 hours until set firm. Serve the soufflé decorated with the remaining whipped cream and pieces of angelica.



Duck portions

Duck portions are quick to microwave and are now cheaper and more easily available than ever before. With their unique, rich flavour, they make the perfect choice for that extra special meal.

Duck is fast becoming a very popular poultry choice. Duck portions come in three cuts, leg joints, wing (including breast) and breast fillets. Leg and wing pieces are available fresh or frozen from butchers or supermarkets. Boneless breast fillets are not so widely available but can be found in good food stores. They are the most expensive, but there is no waste.

When roasting duck pieces, colour the skin by using a browning dish or marinate in soy sauce, oil and honey and microwave on a roasting rack. Place the roasting rack in a deep dish and drain cooking juices during microwaving. Cover duck with a roasting bag or greaseproof paper if using a rack as the fat will spit. Turn the portions over and rearrange halfway through.

Before cooking in a sauce, duck can be conventionally fried or grilled or microwave-roasted to remove some of the fat. This is advisable as it helps to brown and crisp the skin.

How to quarter and prepare a duck

Using *a pair of poultry shears or a sharp knife, cut the duck in half along the back and breast.*

Cut *each half in half again as evenly as possible, leaving a portion of the breast with each leg.*

Make *diagonal, diamond-shaped incisions in the skin and fat to help fat drain away during cooking.*

Sweet 'n' Sour Duck and Grapefruit Duck

Grapefruit duck

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 duck breast fillets, about 175g / 6oz each
grapefruit slices, to garnish

MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
juice of ½ grapefruit
1 clove garlic, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls chopped mixed herbs
1 bay leaf

SAUCE
½ grapefruit, segmented
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Wipe the duck breasts with absorbent paper, then make diagonal cuts through the skin to make a diamond pattern.
2 In a shallow dish, combine the marinade ingredients, add the duck and coat well. Cover and marinate for 4 hours, turning from time to time. Drain and reserve marinade, but discard bay leaf.
3 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions.

Microtips

If you do not have a browning dish, microwave the duck fillets for the same time as Sweet 'n' Sour Duck, page 480. Instead of using a marinade to add colour sprinkle duck flesh with a little microwave seasoning during cooking.

Test duck for doneness by piercing the flesh with a sharp knife. Duck is ready to serve when the inside is just slightly pink and the juices run clear.

4 Place the duck, skin side down, on dish and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
5 Turn over and cook for a further 10 minutes, rearranging duck once during cooking. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Grill for 1-2 of these minutes for a crisp skin if desired.
6 Chop the grapefruit segments.
7 Mix cornflour and water in a small jug. Add reserved marinade and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring every 40 seconds. Add chopped grapefruit.
8 Pour the sauce over the duck and garnish with grapefruit slices before serving.

VARIATION
Orange Duck: Substitute one large orange for the grapefruit and add 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice and juice of ½ orange to marinade.

Duck with olives

50 mins

Standing time: none

4 portions duck, leg or wing, about 350-400g / 12-14oz each
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary
1 bay leaf
black pepper
275ml / ½pt dry white wine
225g / 8oz mushrooms, halved
250g / 9oz green olives, stoned

SERVES 4

1 Wipe duck with absorbent paper, then make diagonal cuts to form a diamond pattern.
2 Place the onion in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Stir in purée, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, black pepper and wine.
4 Add duck portions, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, rearranging once.
5 Add the mushrooms and olives, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30 minutes; stir once.
6 Remove duck and place under a hot grill. Cook for 1-2 minutes until skin goes crisp and brown. Arrange on warm serving dish with the olives and mushrooms.
7 Remove fat from the sauce, then microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Transfer to a sauce boat.

Duck with Olives

SU JORGENSEN

Microtips

To thaw 4 frozen duck portions (approximately 1.6kg / 3½lb): Place in a dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Turn over and rearrange, then microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Stand for 15 minutes.

Sweet 'n' sour duck

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 duck breast fillets, about 175g / 6oz each

MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
120ml / 8tbls dry sherry
45ml / 3tbls clear honey
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp finely chopped root ginger
finely grated zest of 1 orange
1 onion, finely chopped
black pepper
spring onions, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Wipe duck breasts with absorbent paper. Make diagonal cuts to form a diamond pattern.
2 In a shallow dish, combine marinade ingredients. Add duck breasts and coat well. Cover and marinate for 4 hours, turning from time to time.
3 Remove breasts from marinade and place on a roasting rack. Brush with a little marinade.
4 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 15-20 minutes, brushing frequently with marinade and turning once. Meat should be pale brown on the outside, slightly pink inside.
5 Stand for 5 minutes; place under hot grill for 1-2 minutes to crisp the skin if wished.

Cranberry glazed duck

21 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This has a lightly spiced flavour and is delicious served with new potatoes, green beans and julienne of carrots.

4 duck pieces, 350-400g / 12-14oz each
120ml / 8tbls cranberry jelly
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
10ml / 2tsp light soy sauce
salt and black pepper

SERVES 4

How to microwave Cranberry glazed duck

Mix *cranberry jelly, lemon juice, soy sauce and seasoning in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until hot.*

Arrange *prepared duck portions on a roasting rack over a deep dish. Spoon over half the glaze to coat each portion and reserve remaining glaze.*

Place *the duck and rack in a roasting bag and fasten it loosely with an elastic band. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes.*

Halfway *through cooking, remove from roasting bag, rearrange portions and brush with remaining glaze. Pour off cooking juices.*

Test *for doneness by piercing thickest meaty part of meat with a sharp knife. The flesh should be slightly pink and juice run clear. Stand for 10 minutes.*

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Snack soups

Vegetables, imagination and a little microwave magic — that's all you need to create a satisfying snack in its own right, or the ideal starter to a light meal.

Soups are quick to make in the microwave cooker, especially if you use stock cubes or condensed canned soups for the base. Stir the soup both during cooking and on removal from the cooker. Cover the soup when pre-cooking vegetables to keep in maximum moisture and quicken the cooking, but generally leave uncovered once the liquid is added. Soups can be stored, covered, for up to 2 days only. Reheat 1-2 portions in individual bowls; for more, use one large container. Serve with croûtons or grated cheese.

Minestrone Soup

Egg drop soup

10 mins

Standing time: none

1 spring onion, chopped
2 chicken stock cubes, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls light soy sauce
850ml / 1½pt hot water
2 eggs, lightly beaten

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, combine the onion, stock cubes, soy sauce and water.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, uncovered, or until soup is boiling.
3 Stir the soup, pour the eggs in a thin circular stream over the boiling soup. The egg will start to cook in the heat of the soup and will set in soft strands.
4 Serve immediately.

Minestrone soup

30 mins

Standing time: none

2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
2 carrots, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed (optional)
1 large potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
2 courgettes, thinly sliced
175g / 6oz green beans, cut into pieces (see Microtips)
25g / 1oz spaghetti, broken up
850ml / 1½pt hot water
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
15ml / 1tbls parsley flakes

SERVES 6

1 In a 2.3-2.8 / 4-5pt casserole, mix all ingredients, then cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-35 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir once or twice.

Microtips

If using frozen green beans, thaw in a bowl, covered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.

Spicy tomato soup

10 mins

Standing time: none

850ml / 1½pt tomato juice
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
large pinch of dried basil
pinch of dried thyme
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
pinch of sugar
lemon slices and celery leaves

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients (except lemon and celery) in a 1.1L /2pt casserole, cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes or until the soup is thoroughly heated.
3 Pour the soup into 4 serving bowls or mugs and garnish with lemon slices and celery leaves.

Above: *Egg Drop Soup*
Below: *Spicy Tomato Soup*

Garden vegetable soup

11 mins

Standing time: none

295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of chicken soup diluted with 2 × cans hot water
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
pinch of dried thyme
pinch of dried basil
small pinch of dried onion powder
175g / 6oz broccoli
2 carrots
6 lettuce leaves

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole combine the soup, water, soy sauce, thyme, basil and onion powder.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until just boiling.
3 Cut the broccoli stems into thin slices, and florets into small pieces. cut the carrots into long thin strips.
4 When the soup boils, add the broccoli and carrots. Microwave, uncovered, for 6-9 minutes or until the vegetables are just tender and still crisp.
5 Just before serving, shred the lettuce and stir into the hot soup.

VARIATION

Garden vegetable soup for two:

295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of chicken soup diluted with 1 can of hot water
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
small pinch of dried thyme
small pinch of dried basil
small pinch of dried onion powder
100g / 4oz fresh broccoli
1 carrot
3 lettuce leaves

Follow instructions given, left; but microwave in Step 2 for 3-5 minutes and in Step 4 for 4½-7 minutes at 100% (High).

Reheating time for two portions in separate bowls is 4-6 minutes, uncovered, at 100% (High). Stir after half the cooking time.

Microtip

If cooking Garden Vegetable Soup in advance, do not add the lettuce until just before serving or it will become very soft.

Cream of mushroom soup

18 mins

Standing time: none

This recipe gives a quick and easy method for making a classic cream soup. This sauce-type method can be used to make all manner of vegetable soups, which can be puréed in a blender and reheated if liked.

Garden Vegetable Soup

225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, chopped
50g / 2oz butter
75ml / 5tbls plain flour
850ml / 1½pt hot water
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
75g / 3oz Emmental cheese, grated
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls double cream
15ml / 1tbls white wine

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, combine the sliced mushrooms, chopped onion and the butter.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until the onion is tender, stirring after half the cooking time.
3 Blend in the flour, then gradually stir in the water and add the chicken stock cube.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring two-three times during cooking.
5 Blend in the cheese, salt and pepper, double cream and wine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the cheese melts.

VARIATION

Cream of mushroom soup for two:

Halve the ingredient amounts as above and follow the sauce method, but microwave at 100% (High) for half the specified times.

Cream of asparagus soup

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
450g / 1lb fresh asparagus, trimmed and chopped
295g / 10.4oz can cream of chicken soup
275ml / ½pt milk or single cream
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine the celery, onion and butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until tender, stirring once.
2 Add the asparagus and cover.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-13 minutes or until tender, stirring once. Stand for 5 minutes. Purée in a blender.
4 Return to casserole, blend in the remaining ingredients and reduce power to 50% (Medium). Microwave, uncovered, for 7-11 minutes, stirring every 3 minutes.

Cream of cauliflower soup

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

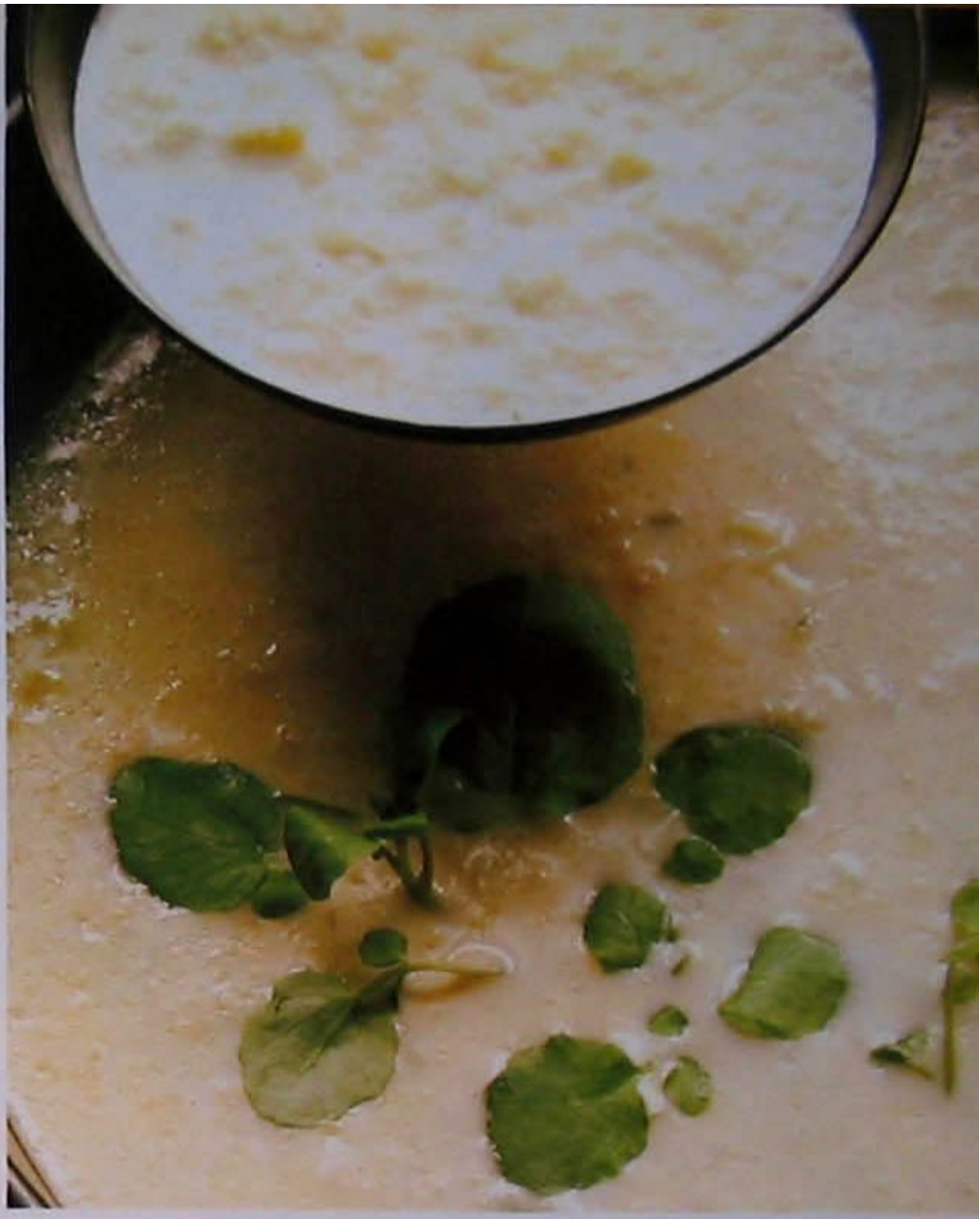
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
1 cauliflower, divided into florets
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of chicken or celery soup
275ml / ½pt milk of single cream
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Follow the instructions above substituting cauliflower for asparagus and adding grated cheese with the milk at Step 4.

VARIATION

Cream of cauliflower for two:
Halve ingredients and follow instructions for Cream of asparagus soup, microwaving as follows: Step 1: 3-5 minutes; Step 3: 6-9 minutes; Step 4: 6-10 minutes.



Cream of Cauliflower Soup

Fresh tomato soup

20 mins

Standing time: none

6 tomatoes, cut into 8 pieces
1 onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp sugar
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
700ml / 1¼pt hot water
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
parsley or watercress, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, combine the tomatoes, onion, celery, butter, sugar, salt and pepper.
2 In a small bowl, mix the flour with 150ml / ¼pt water until smooth.
3 Stir the remaining hot water into the flour.
4 Pour the flour and water into the casserole, add the stock cube and stir to mix. Cover.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes or until the tomatoes are tender. Stir every 5 minutes.
6 Purée the soup or pass through a wire sieve. Heat for 5 minutes at 100% (High) before serving. Garnish with parsley or watercress.

VARIATIONS

Fresh tomato soup for one:
Refrigerate one portion for up to 2 days. To reheat, microwave the soup at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, uncovered. Stir after half the cooking time. Blend in 60ml / 4tbls double cream if wished.

STAR RECIPE

Surprise fish mousse

This dish looks so special that your friends will think you've spent hours preparing it, but with the help of your microwave cooker you'll find that each stage is simple and absolutely foolproof.

Served with Melba toast or crusty wholewheat bread, this mousse will make an appetizing starter. Alternatively, serve with a fresh green salad and new potatoes for a light meal.

The mousse is very easy to make and turning out the mould is no problem — simply line the unfilled mould with cling film, ensuring that there is an overhang that can be pulled to lift the cooked mousse easily and cleanly.

If preferred, use a food processor or blender to save sieving the cheese and flaking the mackerel. Just add both ingredients to the stock mixture (at the end of Step 2) and blend until smooth. (If you decide to sieve the cottage cheese manually, make sure you use a metal sieve — a plastic one will take twice as long).

If the mackerel mixture is set solid at the end of Step 3, microwave at 50% (Medium) for about 1 minute, until like whipped cream.

Surprise fish mousse

4 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
juice of ½ lemon
150ml / ¼pt fish or chicken stock
50g / 2oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
85g / 3½oz packet full fat soft cheese
225g / 8oz smoked mackerel fillets
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
1 egg white
12 spinach leaves
100g / 4oz kipper fillets, thickly sliced with skin removed
225g / 8oz can asparagus spears
lemon slices and asparagus spears, to garnish

SERVES 6

How to microwave Surprise fish mousse

Soak *the gelatine in the lemon juice for 5 minutes. Add stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir after 45 seconds.*

Microwave *butter and onion in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Cool slightly. Blend in full fat cheese, then stock mixture.*

Flake *mackerel; sieve cottage cheese. Combine with stock mixture in a large bowl. Whisk egg white until it stands in soft peaks and fold in. Chill.*

Microwave *spinach, covered, at 100% (High) for 50-60 seconds. Rinse and drain. Line a 1.1L / 2pt mould with cling film, then spinach.*

Microwave *kippers, covered, at 100% (High), for 20-30 seconds. Cool. Layer mackerel mixture with kipper and asparagus in mould, starting and finishing with mackerel.*

Fold *any overhanging spinach leaves back over the top surface of the mousse. Cover and refrigerate overnight. To serve, turn out onto a plate and garnish with lemon slices.*

Quick freezer meals

Make up your own snacks with fresh, wholesome ingredients. Freeze them and you will have your own convenience foods ready to reheat at a moment's notice — and packed with home-cooked goodness.

When you're rushing around and don't have time to make yourself or others a satisfying meal, ready-prepared snacks, stored in freezer, are the only answer.

A popular choice with any household in a hurry is a substantial sandwich. An American favourite, which has been adapted here for the microwave, is the Sloppy Joe — a delicious savoury mince mixture served in a bread roll. Hot and tasty, it makes a good competitor to the hamburger any day. But don't just make one serving — cook the mince mixture in bulk and divide it into one-sandwich portions for freezing. Use the instructions here to microwave as many portions as you need and spoon the hot mince into a fresh roll, or a frozen one, thawed. To make thawing even easier, you can make up the whole sandwich in advance, as in the Hot Chicken Sandwiches, see page 491.

For a complete meal-in-one, try Stuffed Meat Cups (page 489). Meat on the outside and vegetables inside, they form a fully balanced meal — thawed and on the plate in minutes. For a more substantial meal, add a salad and a portion of cooked rice, reheated in the microwave, or chunk of wholemeal bread. But without extras it makes a perfect slimmer's meal.

Pizzas and stuffed baked potatoes are handy snack foods. Packed in individual portions, they make a wholesome, quick meal in moments. When there isn't time to cook a meal or members of the family are left to cater for themselves, a spicy pizza or well-filled potato makes a perfect lunch or supper dish.

To take advantage of these freezer snacks and quick meals, make up several portions of the same dish in one large bag or freezer container. Include thawing and reheating instructions in the bag, for one, two or four portions, so that any member of the family can microwave them. Remember the microwave cooker is safer for children and old people than the conventional oven, because the cooker itself does not get hot.

Stuffed Meat Cups

Stuffed meat cups

23 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb minced beef
60ml / 4tbls dried breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

FILLING
275g / 10oz packet frozen chopped spinach
100g / 4oz Emmental cheese, grated
4 bacon rashers, cooked and crumbled (see page 150)

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the minced beef, dried crumbs, egg, sauce and seasoning.
2 Pierce the packet of spinach and put on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, shaking packet once or twice. Drain thoroughly.
3 Turn the spinach into a bowl together with the Emmental cheese and bacon, tossing to combine.
4 Divide the beef mixture into four portions, separating off one-third of each portions for 'lids'. Mould the two-thirds portion into cup shapes in four freezer / microwave containers, about 8cm / 3½in wide and 5cm / 2in deep. Press equal amounts of the filling into each 'cup', cover with the remaining 'lid' portion of beef and seal edges thoroughly.
5 Place containers on absorbent paper to soak up any fat spillages, cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes until the beef is no longer pink, rearranging the containers once.
6 Cover with foil or a lid and cool before wrapping and freezing. Freeze for up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Uncover the containers and place on absorbent paper in the cooker. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, rearranging once. Cover with foil. Let stand for 3 minutes.

VARIATIONS
Stuffed meat cups for one: Unwrap one container from the freezer and place on absorbent paper. Cover with paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes; rearrange once. Cover with foil and stand for 3 minutes.
Stuffed meat cups for two: To serve, microwave two containers for 6 minutes; stand for 3 minutes.

Individual pizzas

10 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

230g / 8oz can tomatoes, drained
15ml / 1tbls grated onion
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
4 muffins, white or wholemeal, split
25g / 1oz pepperoni or spiced sausage, thinly sliced
50g / 2oz mushrooms, sliced
175g / 6oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

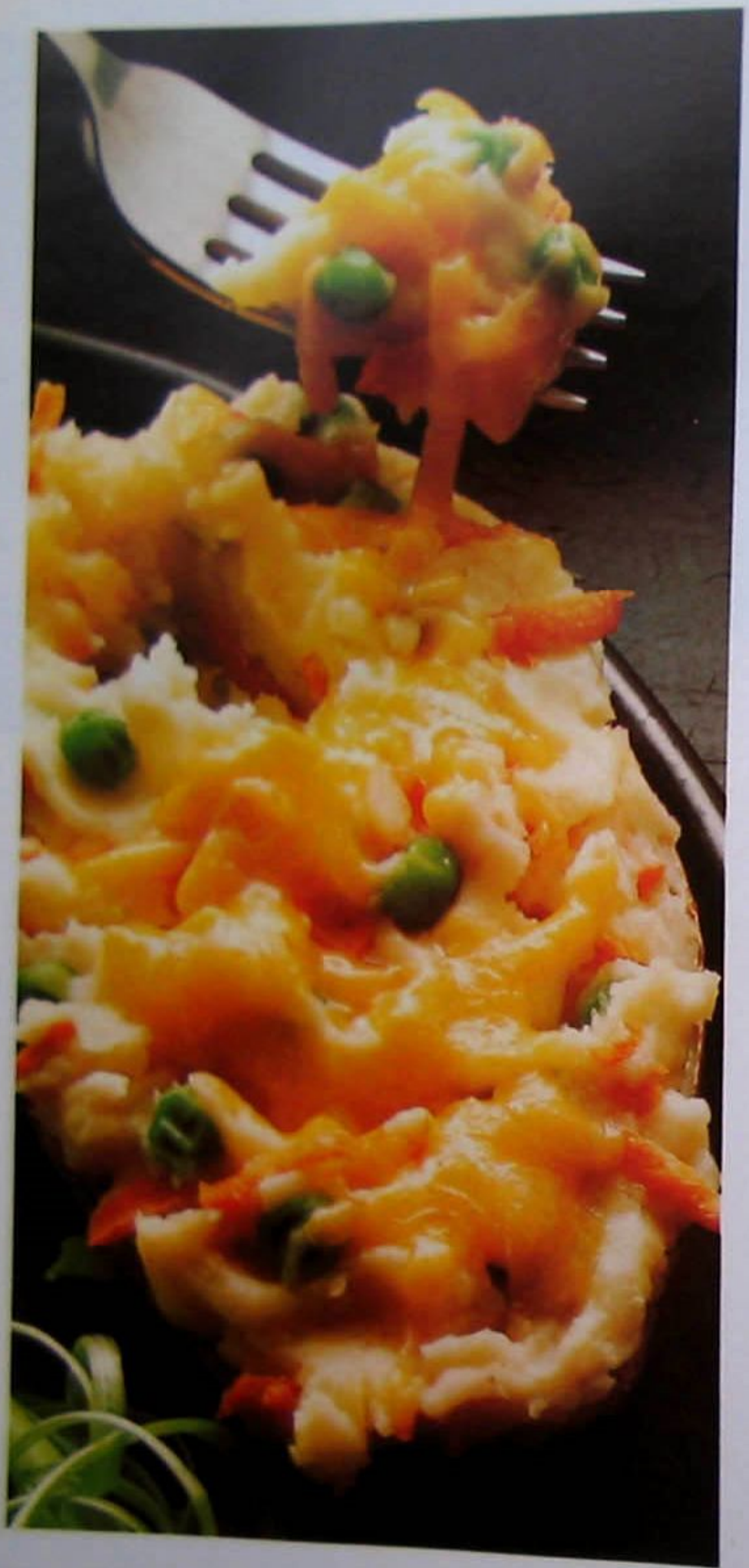
SERVES 4

Individual Pizzas

1 Place the tomatoes, onion, oregano, basil and seasoning in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until thick and pulpy, stirring twice. Leave to cool.
2 Spread some tomato mix on each muffin half, arrange the pepperoni and mushrooms on top and sprinkle with the cheese. Wrap each pizza separately and freeze up to 2 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the pizzas and place on absorbent paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-6½ minutes, rearranging the pizzas once during cooking. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.

VARIATIONS
Individual pizzas for one: To serve, unwrap two pizzas and place on absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, rearranging once.
Individual pizzas for two: To serve, microwave four pizzas at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes.



Twice-baked potatoes

27 mins

Standing time : 2-3 mins

4 × 175-225g / 6-8oz potatoes, scrubbed
50g / 2oz frozen green peas
1 small carrot, coarsely grated
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
45-60ml / 3-4tbls milk
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Prick the potatoes, then arrange on absorbent paper in the cooker at least 2.5cm / 1in apart. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, turning potatoes over and rearranging after half the time. Wrap each one and leave to stand for 5 minutes or until soft.

2 Place the peas, carrot, onion and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until the vegetables are just tender; drain.

3 Cut a large slice from the top of each potato. Scoop all the flesh into the bowl and mash until smooth. Mix in the butter and, when melted, add the vegetables, milk to moisten, and seasoning.

4 Pack the filling into the potato skins and let cool. Wrap separately and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE

Unwrap the potatoes, place on absorbent paper in the cooker and cover loosely with cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, rearranging once. Remove cling film. Sprinkle the cheese on top and microwave for 1½ minutes. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.

VARIATIONS

Twice-baked potatoes for one: To serve, unwrap one potato, place on absorbent paper and cover loosely with cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes, turning and rearranging

Twice-baked Potatoes

once. Sprinkle cheese on top and microwave for a further 45 seconds. Let stand for 2-3 minutes.
Twice-baked potatoes for two: To serve, unwrap two potatoes and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and microwave for 1 minute. Let stand 2-3 minutes.

Hot chicken sandwiches

5 mins

Standing time: none

For a sharper taste, use salad cream rather than mayonnaise for these sandwiches, if preferred.

225g / 8oz cooked chicken, chopped
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls sweet pickle or chutney, drained if necessary
30ml / 2tbls salad cream or mayonnaise
salt and pepper
4 wholemeal or white bread baps or muffins

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the chicken, cheese, pickle or chutney, salad cream or mayonnaise and seasoning. Split the baps, spread the chicken mixture equally between the bases and cover with the tops.
2 Wrap each bap separately, pack in a plastic bag and freeze for up to 2 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap each sandwich and place on absorbent paper. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-5½ minutes, rearranging once during cooking.

VARIATIONS
Substitute cooked ham, tongue or turkey for the chicken. Add crisp lettuce, watercress, spring onions or cucumber just before serving.
Hot chicken sandwiches for one: To serve, unwrap one sandwich and place on absorbent paper. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.
Hot chicken sandwiches for two: Microwave two sandwiches, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.

Sloppy Joes

13½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb minced beef
1 onion, finely chopped
300g / 10.6oz can chunky vegetable soup
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
7.5ml / 1½tsp made English mustard
5ml / 1tsp tomato ketchup
10ml / 2tsp vinegar
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar
salt and pepper
4 bread rolls, frozen

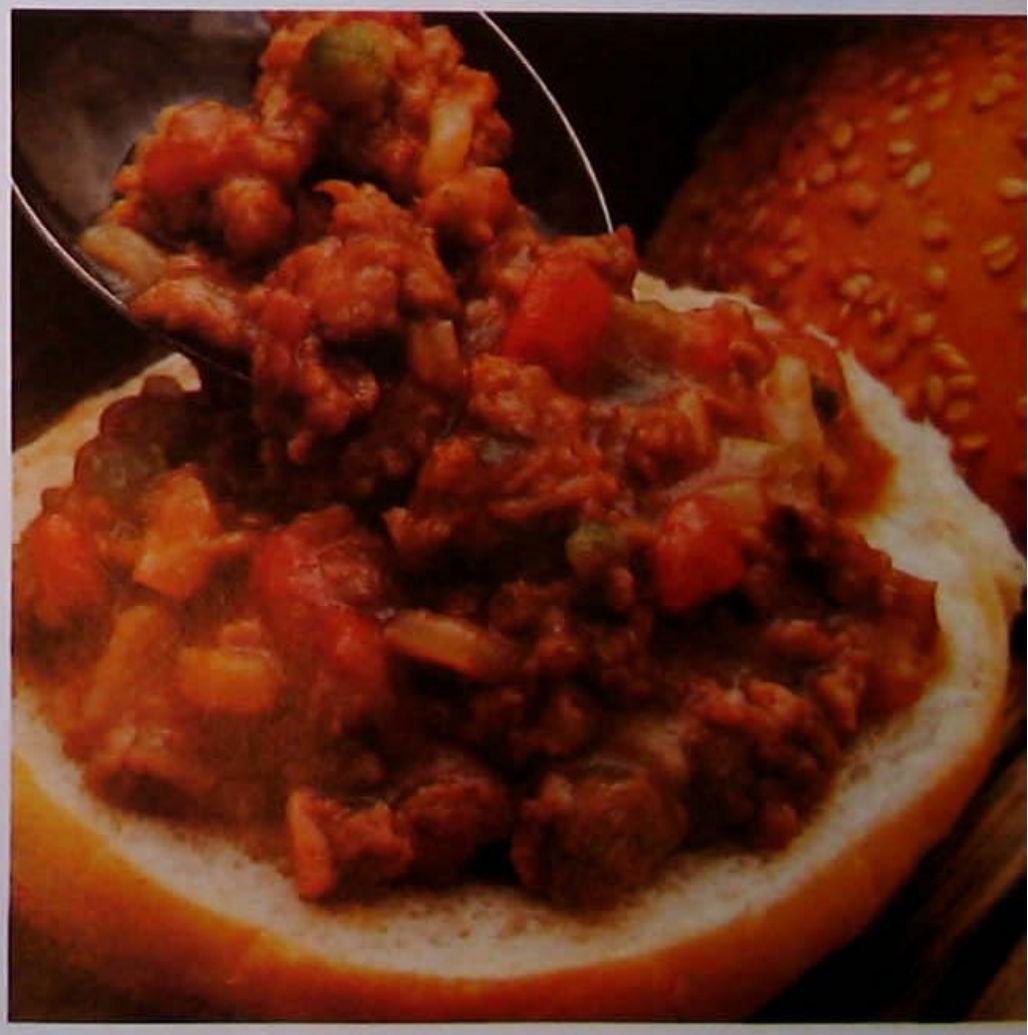
SERVES 4

1 Crumble the minced beef into a casserole; mix in the onion. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until the meat is tender; stir once. Strain off any liquid.
2 Mix in the soup, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, ketchup, vinegar, sugar and seasoning. Seal in four freezer/microwave containers, label and freeze up to two months.

TO SERVE
Uncover each container and microwave at 100% (High) for 7½-8 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes. Add four bread rolls to the cooker for the last 1½ minutes. Split warmed rolls; fill with hot minced beef mixture.

VARIATIONS
Sloppy Joes for one: To serve, uncover one container and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, stirring once. Add one roll for the last 45 seconds. Split and fill with the mixture.
Sloppy Joes for two: To serve, microwave two containers at 100% (High) for 6-6½ minutes, stirring after 4 minutes. Add two bread rolls for the last minute. Split and fill with the mixture.

Sloppy Joes



Combination cookers 1

Microwave and convection cooking combined in one machine offers the best of both worlds — golden crisp and evenly baked foods cooked quickly and moistly in the very minimum of time.

The principle of combination cooking is to combine the two methods of convection and microwave cooking. Usually they are united in a single oven cavity although some manufacturers have designed separate ovens.

Convected heat will ensure foods cook to a crisp golden brown finish where necessary, whilst microwave energy effectively speeds up cooking times.

There are two types of single oven combination cookers. The Microwave and convection can either be used in sequence (which is the type of combination cooker explained here) or, the two methods of cooking may be used in combination, operating at the same time — these models will be explained in a later issue.

Most sequence combination cookers can be used for convection cooking alone, microwave cooking alone, or in tandem.

There are generally two ways of using this combination system. Firstly, convection followed by microwave — a process which can be programmed to operate automatically. Secondly, microwave followed by convection — a manual method of cooking that may be used for items that require thawing before baking, or cooking by microwave to ensure speedily cooked results, but need finishing with convected heat to give a golden or crisp finish.

With some sequence combination models you can use metal containers when you start cooking in the convection mode and then change to the microwave. In this case a guard which will protect the

Madeira Cake, Bakewell Tart

PAUL WEBSTER

magnetron from any damage will come into action. However, you cannot use metal containers when starting with the microwave method and changing to the convection method. Always check your manufacturer's instructions carefully and only use metal containers if recommended by them.

Cookware for a combination cooker must be heatproof. Special baking racks, roasting trivets and thermometers are available for use in combination cookers but they may be suitable for only one of the cooking methods. Always check your manufacturer's instructions before using these.

Bakewell tart

5 mins

Convection cooking time: 25 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz shortcrust pastry
45ml / 3tbls raspberry jam
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz caster sugar
grated zest of ½ lemon
1 large egg, beaten
75g / 3oz ground almonds
75g / 3oz fine cake crumbs
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice or milk

SERVES 4-6

1 Heat convection cooker to 200°C, about 10 minutes.
2 Roll out the pastry and use to line a 20cm / 8in flan dish. Trim the edges.
3 Spread the jam over the base.
4 Cream the butter or margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the lemon zest and egg, blending well.
5 Fold in the almonds, cake crumbs and lemon juice or milk to make a mixture with a dropping consistency. Spread smoothly over the jam.
6 Cook on the convection rack for 25 minutes, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes.

Do

- Use the combination cooker with food that benefits from a crisp, brown finish.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on pre-heating the convection oven.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on using the convection rack and/or roasting or grilling trivet supplied.
- Use special dual safe microwave/conventional cooking thermometers. Other types should only be used outside the cooker.

Don't

- Rearrange foods while using the convection method of cooking: convected hot air ensures evenly cooked and baked results.
- Use microwave cookware that is not heatproof in the convection oven. Some specialized microwave cookware can be used in temperatures up to 200°C.
- Use metal cooking containers unless your manufacturer's instructions say you can. Then only use them when starting in the convection mode and finishing with the microwave.

Madeira cake

4 mins

Convection cooking time: 45 mins

Standing time: none

Traditionally this cake is served with a glass of Madeira sherry, but it is also good with a cup of tea. The decoration is placed on the cake after it has been partially cooked so that it does not sink into the cake mixture.

175g / 6oz butter, softened at 30% (Low) for 15 seconds
175g / 6oz caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 eggs, beaten
225g / 8oz plain flour
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
30ml / 2tbls milk
1 strip citron peel

MAKES AN 18cm / 7in ROUND CAKE

1 Heat the convection cooker to 180°C, about 10 minutes.
2 Cream the butter with the sugar and lemon zest until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs with a wooden spoon, a little at a time, blending well.
3 Sift the flour and baking powder into the creamed mixture, then fold in.
4 Spoon into a lightly greased 18cm / 7in round cake tin or ovenproof glass dish, and smooth the surface.
5 Cook by convection method at 180°C for 45 minutes, carefully placing the piece of citron peel on top of the cake after 20 minutes.
6 Microwave the cake at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes. Allow to cool slightly before turning out onto a wire rack to cool. Store the Madeira cake in an airtight tin until required.

Sausage Rolls

Sausage rolls

5 mins

Convection cooking time: 25 mins

Standing time: none

12 large frozen uncooked sausage rolls
beaten egg or milk, to glaze

MAKES 12

1 Place the sausage rolls on the turntable or a heatproof dish. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes.
2 Remove the sausage rolls from the cooker and brush with beaten egg or milk, to glaze.
3 Change to the convection method and return the sausage rolls to the cooker. Cook from a cold start at 230°C for 25 minutes.
4 Transfer the sausage rolls to a wire rack to cool. Serve warm or cold.

PAUL WEBSTER

Roast potatoes

9 mins

Convection cooking time: 20 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

700g / 1½lb potatoes, quartered
75ml / 5tbls water
pinch of salt
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil, dripping or meat roasting fat

SERVES 4

1 Put the potatoes in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole with the water and salt. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, stirring once. Leave to stand for 3 minutes, then drain.
2 Put the oil, dripping or meat roasting fat in a medium-sized roasting tin and place on the convection rack while you heat the cooker to 230°C, about 10 minutes.
3 Add the potatoes to the tin, turning and basting them with the hot fat. Cook, on the convection rack, at 230°C, for 20-25 minutes until golden and crisp. Turn the potatoes over halfway through the cooking time.
4 Place on absorbent paper to drain, then serve.

PAUL WEBSTER

Stuffed roast chicken

25 mins

Convection cooking time: 40 mins

Standing time: 10-15 mins

By initially cooking this tasty stuffed roast chicken by the convection method you can ensure it has a crisp brown skin that will make it look as good as it tastes. The microwave finish will speed up the total cooking time and make the flesh extra moist and succulent.

1.8kg / 4lb oven-ready chicken
25g / 1oz butter
watercress sprigs, to garnish

STUFFING
30ml / 2tbls rolled oats
60ml / 4tbls fresh white breadcrumbs
½ small onion, grated
40g / 1½oz cooked ham, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper
beaten egg, to bind

SERVES 4-6

1 Heat the convection cooker to 190°C, about 10 minutes.
2 Prepare the stuffing by mixing the oats with the breadcrumbs, onion, ham, celery, parsley, thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Bind together with beaten egg, mixing well.
3 Spoon the stuffing into the neck cavity of the chicken and sew up with a trussing needle and string.
4 Lightly grease a roasting dish and rub the chicken breast, legs and wings with the butter. Season generously with salt and pepper.
5 Cook, on the convection rack, at 190°C for 40 minutes. Change to the microwave method and transfer the chicken to a microwave roasting rack if wished. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25 minutes, turning and basting three times.
6 Remove from the cooker, cover with foil, shiny side down, and leave to stand for 10-15 minutes before garnishing and serving.

Stuffed Roast Chicken, Roast Potatoes

Cornish pasties

5 mins

Convection cooking time: 45 mins

Standing time: none

Microwaving ensures that the filling for these tasty pasties is well cooked through. In a conventional recipe you would probably have to protect pastry with foil while you finished cooking the filling.

225g / 8oz lean beef steak, cut into long, thin strips
2 potatoes, diced
1 onion, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp mixed dried herbs
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls beef stock
350g / 12oz pkt and 175g / 6oz pkt frozen shortcrust pastry, thawed
beaten egg, to glaze

SERVES 4

1 Heat the convection cooker to 230°C, about 10 minutes.
2 Mix together the meat with the potato, onion, dried herbs, parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Moisten with the beef stock.
3 Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and cut out four 20cm / 8in circles. Divide the meat and vegetable mixture amongst the circles. Dampen the pastry edges with water and draw the circles up to make a seam across the top. Crimp the edges decoratively (see Cook's notes). Brush with a little beaten egg, to glaze.
4 Place the pasties on the greased turntable or a baking dish and cook by the convection method for 15 minutes.
5 Reduce the setting to 160°C and cook for a further 30 minutes.
6 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

Cook's notes

Dampen the edge of the pastry circles and pull the edges up over the filling. Crimp the edges of the pasties together in large flutes using your thumb and first and second fingers.

Savoury crackers

Microwaving savoury crackers is really simple, whether you are making them to serve with cheese or as cocktail snacks. The savoury flavours and nutty textures will make this selection firm family favourites.

The flavour of cheese, herbs and spices will make these assorted crackers quite irresistible. Although microwaving will not brown the tops, the use of coatings such as sesame seeds will add colour, as will paprika, wholemeal flour, or a few drops of food colouring in the mixture.

These crackers are simple to make, and look quite plain; but they can be made to look more attractive by using fluted cutters or a fluted pastry wheel for stamping out or cutting, or by crimping the edges of the shortbread-style biscuits which are cut in wedges.

Ten minutes should be enough for preparing and microwaving a batch of crackers, so make sure you have a good stock of basic dry ingredients (flour, herbs, oats, seasonings and toppings), and you will be able to conjure them up at the last minute for any occasion.

Wholewheat and Rye Crackers

Savoury oaties

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75ml / 5tbls water
25g / 1oz butter
225g / 8oz medium oatmeal
1.5ml / ¼tsp bicarbonate of soda
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp chopped sage or thyme

MAKES 8

1 Put the water and fat in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to melt the fat. Allow to cool slightly.
2 Mix the oatmeal with the bicarbonate of soda, salt and sage or thyme in a bowl.
3 Stir in the cooled liquid and mix to form a smooth dough. Form this into a ball and place on a microwave baking tray or large flat plate. Pat out using your hand to make a 23cm / 9in round. Pinch and flute the edges decoratively. Mark into eight wedges with a knife.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12 minutes (500 watt, 7-9 minutes), giving the tray ¼ turn every 3 minutes. Allow to stand for 5 minutes.
5 Re-mark the wedges with a sharp knife and transfer to a wire rack to cool.
6 Serve warm or cold with soup or cheese.

Poppy seed cheese layers

10 mins

Standing time: none

125g / 4½oz plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
65g / 2½oz butter
75g / 3oz Emmental cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls single cream
poppy seeds or sesame seeds, to sprinkle
85g / 3½oz packet full fat soft cheese with chives or with garlic and herbs

MAKES 22

PAUL WEBSTER

1 Sift the flour with the baking powder, paprika and salt.
2 Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Add cheese and cream and mix to a firm, pliable dough.
4 Roll out on a slightly floured surface and stamp out 44 rounds using a 5cm / 2in fluted cutter.
5 Arrange a quarter of the rounds in a circle on a microwave baking tray. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes, (500 watt, 3½-4 minutes) turning once. Cool on a wire rack.
6 Arrange remaining rounds in two batches. Sprinkle with poppy seeds. Microwave as before.
7 Sandwich plain and coated biscuits together with the cream cheese.

Cheesy digestives

10 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz plain wholewheat flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
45ml / 3tbls medium oatmeal
75g / 3oz lard or white vegetable fat

Poppy Seed Cheese Layers

40g / 1½oz Cotswold or Cheddar cheese with walnuts, grated
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls water

MAKES 20

1 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and add the oatmeal. Mix in any bran which remains in the sieve.
2 Rub in the fat, using the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Stir in the cheese and sugar, mixing well.
4 Add the egg and water and mix to make a firm but pliable dough.
5 Roll out on a lightly floured surface and cut out about 20 rounds using a 7.5cm / 3in cutter. Re-roll the dough if necessary.
6 Arrange five biscuits in a ring on a double layer of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes (500 watt, 3½-4 minutes), turning once.
7 Remove with a palette knife and transfer to a wire rack to cool and become crisp. Repeat the microwaving for three more batches.
8 Serve with cheese and pickles.

Rye crackers

6¾ mins

Standing time: none

60ml / 4tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls rye flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp caraway seeds
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
30-45ml / 2-3tbls cold water

MAKES 42

Wholewheat crackers

6¾ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz plain wholewheat flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
10ml / 2tsp sesame seeds
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
30-45ml / 2-3tbls cold water

MAKES 42

Cheese sticks

9 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
10ml / 2tsp caraway or dill seeds (optional)
60g / 2½oz lard or white vegetable fat
100g / 4oz Cheddar or Edam cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls water
3-4 drops yellow food colouring

MAKES 42

1 Mix the flour with the salt and caraway or dill seeds if used.
2 Rub in the fat, using the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Stir in the cheese, mixing well.
4 Mix the water with the food colouring. Sprinkle it over the rubbed-in mixture and bind together using a fork to make a firm but pliable dough. Knead lightly until smooth.
5 Roll out on a lightly floured surface to a rectangle 38 × 23cm / 15 × 9in. Trim the edges neatly with a sharp knife. Sprinkle lightly with extra salt if liked.
6 Using a sharp knife, cut into 7.5 × 2.5cm / 3 × 1in sticks.
7 Arrange 14 sticks on a greased microwave baking tray or large flat plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes (for 500 watt, 3½ minutes), turning after 2 minutes, checking constantly.
8 Remove at once with a palette knife and transfer to a wire rack to cool. Repeat with two more batches of 14 sticks.

Microtips

Microwaved crackers are not crisp when just cooked, so care should be taken when moving them to the wire rack to cool.

How to microwave Rye crackers and Wholewheat crackers

Combine *the flour(s), salt and seeds in a bowl. Cut in the butter with a whisk at low speed, or by rubbing in with the fingertips.*

Sprinkle *the water over the crumble mixture. Bind together with a fork to make a firm but pliable dough. Knead lightly until smooth.*

Roll *out on a lightly floured surface to a rectangle 35 × 30cm / 14 × 12in. Trim edges and cut into 5cm / 2in squares with a fluted pastry wheel.*

Arrange *11-14 crackers on a lightly greased microwave baking tray or large plate, spacing them evenly so that all receive similar energy.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2¼-2½ minutes (500 watt, 3-3½ minutes), turning the crackers once. They should be dry and firm to touch.*

Transfer *to a rack to cool using a metal spatula. The crackers will become crisp as they cool. Store in an airtight tin for up to 2 weeks.*

Cheesy chive shortbread

2 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

65g / 2½oz plain flour
15ml / 1tbls ground rice
pinch of grated nutmeg
pinch of mustard powder
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives
10ml / 2tsp single cream
Parmesan grated for sprinkling
stuffed olives, sliced, to garnish

MAKES 8

1 Line an 18cm / 7in fluted flan dish with cling film.
2 Sift the flour, ground rice, nutmeg, mustard and salt into a bowl. Rub in the butter or margarine, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the cheese and chives. Bind with cream to a firm dough.
3 Press into the flan dish and level. Mark into eight wedges with a knife and prick with a fork.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes (for 500 watt, 4 minutes), giving the dish ¼ turn every minute.
5 Re-mark the wedges with a sharp knife. Stand for 5 minutes.
6 Cut into wedges and cool on a wire rack. Sprinkle with cheese and garnish with olives.

Mustard cheese snacks

7 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz plain flour
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz lard or white vegetable fat
40g / 1½oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
5ml / 1tsp wholegrain mustard
60ml / 4tbls water
paprika, to sprinkle

MAKES 24

PAUL WEBSTER

1 Sift the flour into a bowl with a little salt and pepper and the mustard.
2 Rub in the fats, using the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Add the cheeses and mix well.
4 Mix the wholegrain mustard with the water and sprinkle over the rubbed-in mixture. Bind together using a fork to make a firm but pliable dough.
5 Form the mixture into 24 small balls, each a little smaller than a walnut.
6 Place four at a time on a double layer of absorbent paper on a microwave baking tray or large flat plate and sprinkle the tops evenly with paprika to improve the colour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1¾-2¼ minutes (for 500 watt, 4 minutes), turning once during cooking.
7 Remove from the baking tray with a palette knife and leave on a wire rack to cool.
8 Serve the biscuits with cheese or as a snack with dips.

Above: *Mustard and Cheese Snacks*
Below: *Cheesy Chive Shortbread*

Pizzas

Microwave cookers have always been used for heating up ready-made pizzas — but they're even better for making delicious home-baked pizzas, with an endless variety of tasty toppings.

Piping hot pizzas topped with melting cheese are a great favourite, either as a hearty snack to eat with the fingers, or a filling main course. The only drawback with conventional cooking of pizzas is the time it takes to make and prove the yeast dough for the base. Using a microwave, yeast dough bases can be prepared with little fuss and in a very short time. The rising process which normally takes several hours, can be reduced to as little as 45 minutes if you use the microwave to speed it up. The fillings are also quick to cook, so now pizzas can be cooked at home often, rather than just as a special treat.

Recipes are given for a variety of tasty toppings on a soft yeast dough. The dough makes either one large or three small pizzas. This same pizza dough can be used with favourite family topping ingredients to make an endless assortment of mouthwatering pizzas.

Devilled Spanish Pizza

PAUL WEBSTER

Basic pizza dough

4 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

If preferred, rise the dough conventionally in a warm place for 2 hours instead of microwaving.

60ml / 4tbls milk
10ml / 2tsp dried yeast
pinch of sugar
25g / 1oz butter
1 egg, beaten
200g / 7oz plain flour
pinch of salt

MAKES 1 LARGE OR 3 SMALL PIZZAS

How to microwave Basic pizza dough

Place *the milk in jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until warm. Sprinkle in the yeast and sugar and leave to stand in a warm place until frothy.*

Place *the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Add the yeast liquid, egg, flour and salt and mix to a soft, pliable dough.*

Seafood pizza

13 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING
425g / 15oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz canned tuna, drained and flaked
50g / 2oz peeled prawns, defrosted if frozen
50g / 2oz cooked mussels (optional)
10ml / 2tsp chopped capers
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large or 3 small bases. Mix the tomatoes, onion, purée, flour, herbs, salt and pepper in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; stir once.
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 6-8 minutes until thick; stir twice.
3 Spoon the mixture over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of the edges. Top with the seafood and capers. Sprinkle with cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

Knead *until elastic. Place in greased bowl. Microwave at 10% (Low) for 4 minutes, or at 100% (High) for 5-10 seconds, then let stand for 10 minutes. Repeat until double in size.*

Knead *risen dough, then roll out to a 30cm / 12in circle or three 12.5cm / 5in circles. Place on a large plate or pizza browner. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; turn once.*

Cover *the dough base with the chosen topping to within 2.5cm / 1in of edges. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, turning once. (A pizza browner will give a crisper base.)*

Vegetarian pizza

9 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPINGS
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 red pepper, seeded and sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Cheddar or Edam cheese, grated

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large base or 3 small ones. Put the oil, red and green peppers, onion and garlic into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; stir once.

2 Add the tomatoes, mushrooms, salt and pepper to taste; mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

3 Spoon the topping over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of the edges. Sprinkle the top of the pizza with cheese, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the cheese bubbles, turning once.

Left and right: *Vegetarian Pizza*
Centre: *Seafood Pizza*

Four seasons pizza

6 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING

3 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
pinch of dried basil
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese
3-4 black olives
75g / 3oz button mushrooms, sliced
75g / 3oz pepperoni, thinly sliced
3 canned artichoke hearts, sliced

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large base or 3 small ones. Place tomatoes, onion, basil and half the oil in a dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.

2 Sprinkle cheeses over base.

3 Arrange the tomato topping over one quarter. Dot with the olives. Arrange mushroom slices on a second quarter, pepperoni on the third and artichoke on the fourth. Sprinkle with remaining oil. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes; turn once.

Devilled Spanish pizza

13 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING

425g / 15oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, sliced
100g / 4oz salami or chorizo, rind removed and sliced
50g / 2oz stuffed olives, sliced
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large base or 3 small ones. Place tomatoes, onion, purée, flour, oregano, salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Mix well and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.

2 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 6-8 minutes, stirring twice. Spoon over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of edges.

3 Top with the Cheddar, salami, olives and Parmesan. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

Sardine pizza

13 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING

425g / 15oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp dried marjoram
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
2 × 120g / 4½oz cans sardines in oil, drained
few black olives

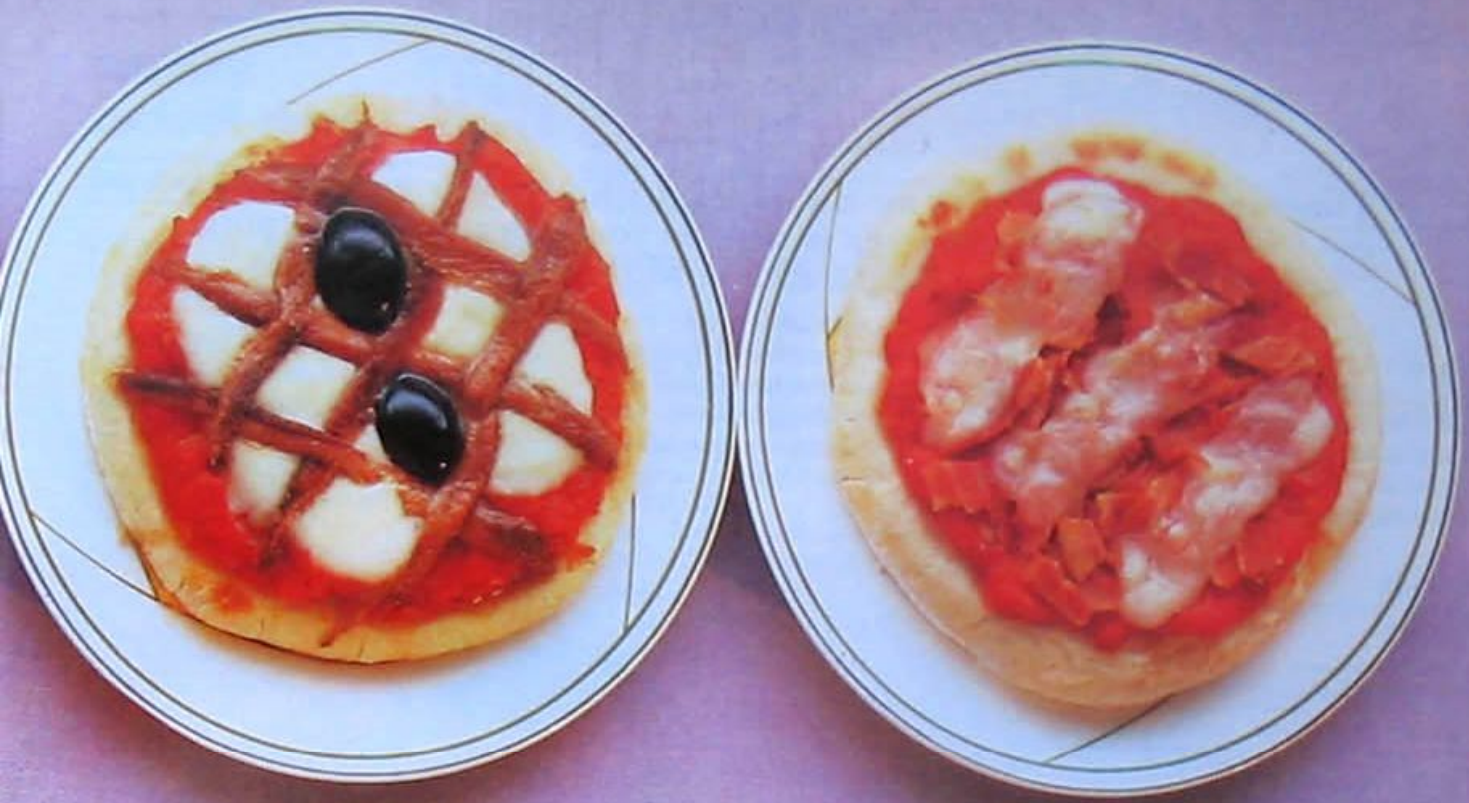
SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large base or 3 small ones. Mix the tomatoes, onion, tomato purée, flour, marjoram, salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.

2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 6-8 minutes until thick and pulpy, stirring twice.

3 Spoon the topping over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of the edges.

4 Sprinkle with cheese. Top with the sardines and olives. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.



PAUL WEBSTER

Barbecue bean pizza

9 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING
½ small onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls dark brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls spicy sauce
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée
5ml / 1tsp made English mustard
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
salt and pepper
275g / 10oz cooked or canned haricot beans, drained
50g / 2oz pineapple, chopped
50g / 2oz smoked ham, chopped
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large or 3 small bases. Mix the onion, sugar, sauce, purée, mustard, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium). Microwave for 3 minutes, stirring once. Add beans and microwave for 2-3 minutes, stirring once. Stir in pineapple and ham.

3 Spread over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of edges. Sprinkle with cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

Italian pizza

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
pinch of dried oregano
pinch of dried marjoram
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
50g / 2oz can anchovy fillets, drained
12 black olives, stoned

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large base or 3 small ones. Put the oil and onion in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.

2 Mix in purée, tomatoes, oregano, marjoram, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

3 Spread tomato mixture over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of edges. Arrange the cheese, anchovies and olives on the top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

Pizzas from left to right: *Sardine; Barbecue Bean; Italian and Danish*

Danish pizza

7½ mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Basic Pizza Dough

TOPPING
3 streaky bacon rashers, rinds removed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Esrom cheese, sliced

SERVES 3-4

1 Prepare 1 large or 3 small pizza bases. Microwave the bacon on three layers of absorbent paper, covered with another, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes.

2 Put oil and onion in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; stir once.

3 Mix in tomato purée, tomatoes, chives, salt and pepper. Spread over base to within 2.5cm / 1in of edge. Cover with cheese and crumbled bacon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

Microwave plus oven

The microwave can cook most recipes, with very few exceptions, but when a conventional oven is needed your microwave can still be useful to speed up preparation and shorten cooking time.

Because microwaving is such a moist method of cooking there are several baked dishes which simply cannot be cooked successfully in the microwave. Rather than just abandon them, use the microwave for preparation, then the conventional oven for the actual baking.

Use the microwave for what it does best — to make a perfectly smooth sauce in only a few minutes or a tasty filling for a sweet or savoury pie — then transfer to the conventional oven to bake the finished dish.

Profiteroles; Savoury Cocktail Choux

Choux puffs

2¼ mins

Conventional oven time: 25 mins

Standing time: none

150ml / ¼pt water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
65g / 2½oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
2 small eggs, beaten
butter for greasing

MAKES ABOUT 40 CHOUX PUFFS

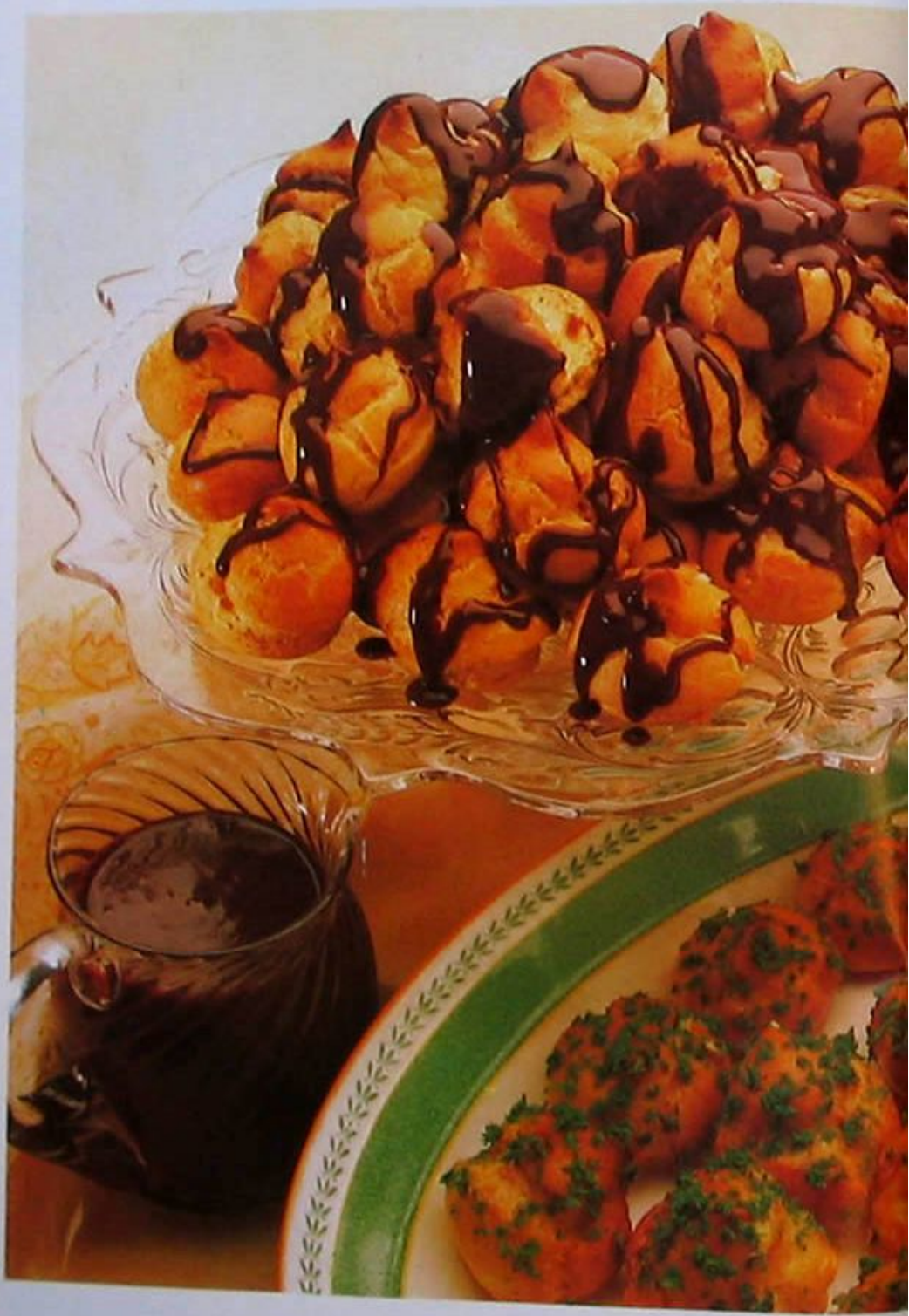
1 Put the water and butter or margarine into a medium-sized bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, turning the bowl once, until the water is just boiling and the butter melted. Immediately tip in the flour and salt and beat well to make a smooth dough.

2 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 20-25 seconds to help cook the flour. Leave to cool slightly, then beat in the eggs a little at a time to make a smooth, glossy paste.

3 Grease 2 baking sheets. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.

4 Using a piping bag fitted with a plain 12mm / ½in nozzle, pipe walnut-sized domes of the paste, well apart, on to the sheets.

5 Bake towards the top of the oven for 20-25 minutes, until crisp and brown. Remove from the oven and make a slit in the side of each puff with a pointed knife to allow the steam to escape. Return the choux puffs to the oven for 5-8 minutes to dry out the insides. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before filling.



RAY DUNS

Savoury cocktail choux

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

Use savoury choux paste for extra flavour if you are going to add a savoury filling to the choux puffs. Follow the basic recipe on page 506, but beat in 50g / 2oz grated cheese and 1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder at the same time as the egg in step 2. A mixture of grated Cheddar and Parmesan is best.

The savoury choux puffs may brown more quickly than plain ones, but give them the full baking time, transferring to a lower shelf if necessary.

40 Savoury Choux Puffs, see left
225ml / 8fl oz milk or milk and stock mixed
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
salt and pepper

HAM FILLING
100g / 4oz cooked, minced ham
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp made English mustard

FISH FILLING
115g / 4oz can brisling or sardines in tomato sauce
5ml / 1tsp grated onion
10-20ml / 2-4tsp lemon juice or vinegar
pinch of curry powder

GARNISH
40g / 1½oz butter, melted
30-45ml / 2-3tbls chopped parsley

MAKES 40 COCKTAIL CHOUX

1 Microwave the milk in an uncovered jug at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until hot.
2 Melt the butter or margarine in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in the flour.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Gradually whisk in the hot milk and seasoning. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, whisking 2 or 3 times, until thickened and boiling.
4 Divide the sauce in half and mix the ham filling ingredients into one half, the fish filling ingredients into the other half.
5 Allow the fillings to cool completely. Using a piping bag fitted with a 6mm / ¼in plain nozzle, carefully pipe the ham filling into half the choux puffs through the side slits. Pipe the fish filling into the remaining choux puffs.
6 To garnish, dip the tops of the filled choux in the melted butter and then into the chopped parsley, or use paprika or sesame seeds.

Profiteroles

6½ mins

Standing time: none

40 Choux Puffs, see left

CONFECTIONER'S CUSTARD
275ml / ½pt milk
70ml / 4½tbls plain flour
50g / 2oz caster sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring

CHOCOLATE SAUCE
175g / 6oz plain chocolate, broken
15g / ½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
60ml / 4tbls single cream or evaporated milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 40 PROFITEROLES

1 Microwave the milk in an uncovered jug for 2 minutes at 100% (High), until hot.
2 Put the flour, sugar, egg and egg yolk into a medium-sized bowl. Beat until smooth. Gradually whisk in the hot milk. Microwave the mixture, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until thick and just bubbling at the edges. Whisk 2 or 3 times. Whisk in the vanilla flavouring.
3 Lay cling film on the surface to prevent a skin forming. Cool for about 15 minutes, then chill for 45 minutes until cold and firm.
4 Using a piping bag fitted with a 6mm / ¼in plain nozzle, carefully pipe the custard into the choux through the side slits.
5 Pile choux onto a serving dish.
6 To make the chocolate sauce, put the chocolate, butter, sugar and cream or milk into a medium-sized bowl.
7 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes beating 3 times until smooth and glossy.
8 Beat in the vanilla flavouring, then leave to cool for 3-5 minutes. Drizzle the hot sauce over the filled choux. Serve immediately or leave until cold and set.

VARIATION
Replace the vanilla flavouring with 15-30ml / 1-2 tbls liqueur.

Cheese Soufflé

Savoury double crust pie

13 mins

Conventional oven time: 35 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
15ml / 1tbls gravy powder
150ml / 5fl oz water
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz mushrooms chopped

PASTRY
225g / 8oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
75g / 3oz margarine
25g / 1oz lard or margarine
60-75ml / 4-5tbls cold water
milk, to glaze

SERVES 4-5

1 Mix the minced beef, onion and carrot in a wide, shallow dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice.
2 Blend together the flour, gravy powder and water. Stir into the beef with the seasoning and mushrooms. Cover and microwave for 8-10 minutes at 100% (High) until thickened. Stir once.
3 Cool mixture about 15 minutes.
4 Heat the conventional oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
5 To make the pastry, sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the margarine and lard until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add enough of the water to mix to a fairly firm dough.
6 Roll out two thirds of the pastry and use to line a 20cm / 8in pie plate. Roll out the remaining pastry for the lid.
7 Fill the pastry case with the cooled filling and brush the pastry rim with milk. Top with the pastry lid and seal. Use any pastry trimmings to decorate the pie.
8 Knock up the pastry edges with the back of a knife. Brush with milk, to glaze. Slit the lid for the steam to escape.
9 Bake toward the top of the oven for 25-30 minutes until well browned, then lower the heat to 190°C / 375°F / Gas 5 and cook for a further 10-15 minutes.

Cheese soufflé

6½ mins

Conventional oven time: 30 mins

Standing time: none

Use the microwave to make a smooth base sauce for this feather-light soufflé.

275ml / ½pt milk
50g / 2oz butter
50g / 2oz plain flour
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper
good pinch of cayenne pepper
4 large eggs, separated
1 egg white

SERVES 4-5

1 Heat the conventional oven to 190°C / 375°F / Gas 5.
2 Generously butter a 2L / 3½pt soufflé dish.
3 Microwave the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until hot. Melt the butter in a large covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.
4 Stir in the flour and microwave uncovered at 100% (High) for 1 minute until the mixture is crumbly.
5 Gradually whisk in the hot milk, then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking 2-3 times until thickened and boiling.
6 Stir in the Cheddar and Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper to taste and cayenne. Beat in the egg yolks.
7 Whisk all the egg whites until they stand in stiff peaks. Stir 2-3 large spoonfuls of the whisked white into the sauce mixture. Very lightly, fold in the remainder until no white can be seen.
8 Turn the mixture into the greased soufflé dish and bake in centre of the oven for 30-35 minutes until well risen and browned. Serve immediately.

VARIATIONS
To ring the changes, stir in 30ml / 2tbls finely chopped fresh herbs with the cheese. Or, add 225g / 8oz cooked, minced meat instead.

Sausages

There's no doubt that sausages are one of the cheapest and most versatile foods around. With the help of your microwave you can dish up tasty meals for the family in minutes.

Sausages can be microwaved using either a browning dish or roasting rack.

If you choose the browning dish method, bear in mind that the dish will have its lid on during cooking. This means that the sausages will partly cook in the steam that is generated, so their skins will be soft rather than crispy. Also the sausages tend to spatter during cooking, so it is advisable to remove the dish from the microwave at the end of the cooking time, stand it on a heatproof mat and allow the spattering to subside a little before removing the lid. (The dish gets very hot indeed, so do wear oven gloves.)

You will, on the whole, achieve a browner effect with the browning dish. If you opt for the rack method, you will need a colouring agent such as soy or Worcestershire sauce to help colour the sausages a little.

Cooking times vary according to the type of sausage (use the chart overleaf). When in doubt, cut sausage open to check, rather than run the risk of undercooking.

Sausages and Apples

Sausages and apples

10 mins

Standing time: none

8 sausages, weighing a total of 450g / 1lb
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
5ml / 1tsp plain flour
3 firm red dessert apples, cored and thinly sliced but not peeled

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages on a pre-heated browning dish or roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) as in chart below.
2 Mix the demerara sugar and the flour well together. Put the apple slices in a large bowl, add the sugar and flour mixture to the apples and stir until the apples are evenly coated.
3 Lay the sausages round the outer edge of the bowl and cover with cling film rolled back at one edge. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the apples are tender and the sausages are heated through. Stir the apples and rearrange sausages halfway through the cooking time.

VARIATION
You can make a tasty variation to this dish by adding a little dried sage (about 2.5ml / ½tsp) to the flour and sugar mixture in Step 2.

Cook's notes

Use dessert apples for this recipe as they keep their shape and do not break up during cooking.

Microtips

You can use canned vegetarian sausages for any of the recipes given here. Use a 425g / 15oz can of vegetarian sausages in brine, drained. Microwave either in a browning dish or on a roasting rack at 100% (High) for 2 minutes in total for Step 1 of each recipe. (They need less cooking time as they are partially cooked already.)

How to microwave sausages

Rack method: *stand rack in baking dish and arrange the sausages on it in a single layer. Brush with a mixture of equal parts of Worcestershire sauce and water or soy sauce and water. Microwave, covered, on first side at 100% (High) for the recommended time (see chart). Turn sausages over; brush with more colouring mixture. Microwave on second side, covered, at 100% (High) for recommended time.*

Browning dish: *pre-heat the empty browning dish in the microwave at 100% (High) according to the manufacturer's instructions (this should usually be for about 5 minutes). Add a little oil, if liked, and arrange the sausages on the dish in a single layer. Cover the dish with the lid and microwave at 100% (High) for the recommended time (see chart). Turn the sausages at least once during cooking.*

Microwave times for sausages

TYPE	QUANTITY	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Standard (pork, beef, pork and beef, etc.)	8	1st side 2½ minutes 2nd side 2½ minutes
	4	1st side 2 minutes 2nd side 2 minutes
Weight: approx. 50g / 2oz each	2	1st side 1½ minutes 2nd side 1 minute
Chipolatas (thin sausages)	8	1st side 1½ minutes 2nd side 1 minute
Weight: approx. 25g / 1oz each	4	1st side 1 minute 2nd side 45 seconds
	2	1st side 45 seconds 2nd side 30 seconds

Sausages and Cheesy Potatoes

Sausages and cheesy potatoes

11 mins

Standing time: none

8 sausages, weighing a total of 450g / 1lb
450g / 1lb potatoes, finely shredded or grated
175g / 6oz Cheddar cheese, grated
75ml / 3fl oz milk
10ml / 2tsp snipped chives
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages on a pre-heated browning dish or roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) as in chart.
2 Mix the potatoes, cheese, milk, chives, mustard powder, salt and pepper together.
3 Lay the cooked sausages in an even layer in a shallow dish. Spread the potato and cheese mixture over the top. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes until the sausages are heated through and the potatoes tender. Set aside.
4 Place under a hot grill and grill until golden brown.

VARIATION

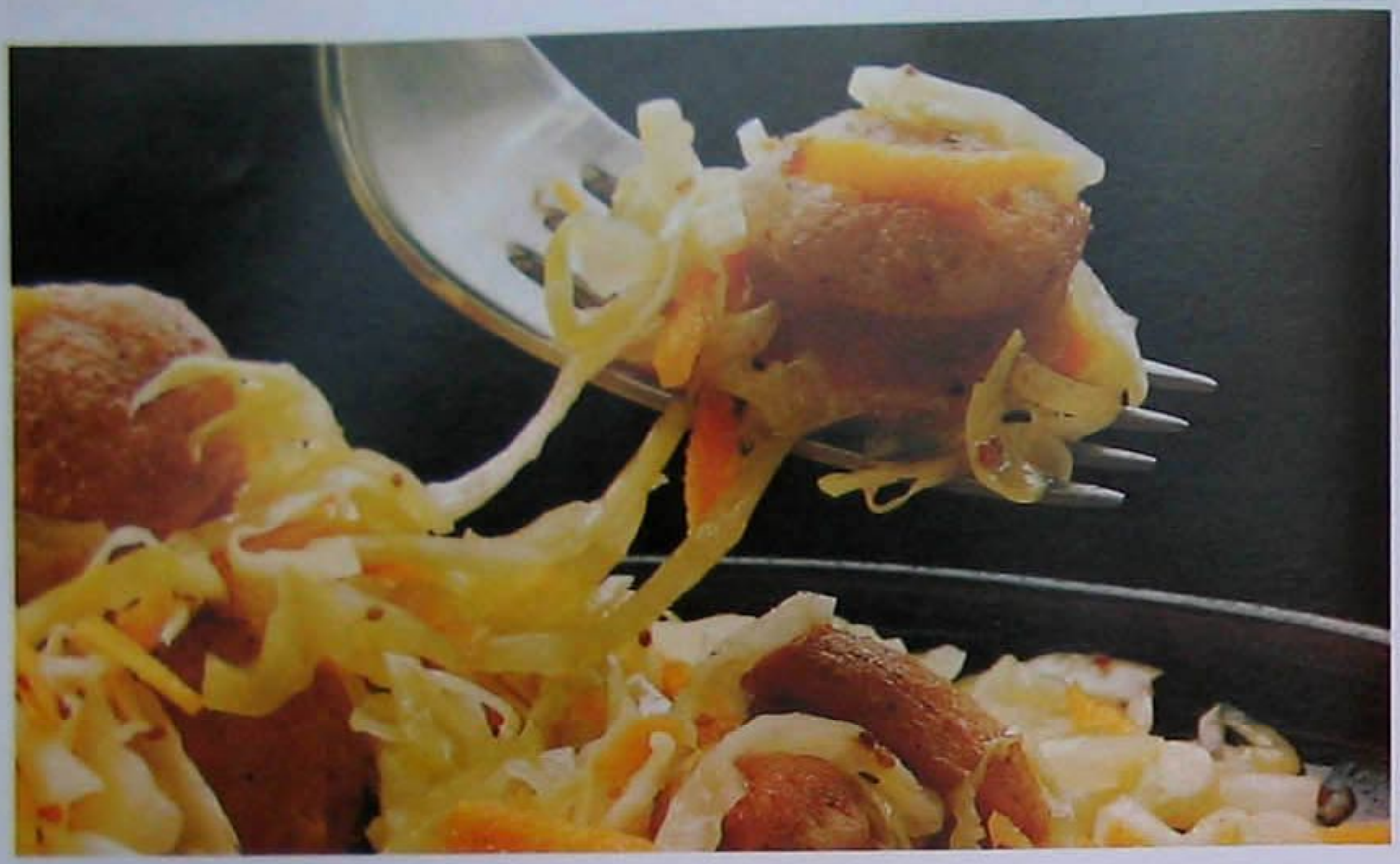
Sausages and cheesy potatoes for two: Use half the given quantities of sausages, potatoes, cheese, chives, plus 50ml / 2fl oz milk and a pinch of mustard powder. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes in step 1 and then at 100% (High) for 3 minutes in step 3.

Microtips

A browning plate can be used in place of a browning dish for these recipes. The cooking times will be the same for both. Heat the dish according to manufacturer's instructions.

Cook's notes

The potatoes must be very finely grated in this recipe if they are to cook through in the time. A food processor or an electric grater is most efficient.



Sausages with Cabbage

Sausages with cabbage

17 mins

Standing time: none

8 sausages, weighing a total of 450g / 1lb
350g / 12oz white cabbage, shredded
2 large carrots, grated
150ml / ¼pt apple juice or lager
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
2.5ml / ½tsp celery seed

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages on a pre-heated browning dish or roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) as in chart. Cut into 12mm / ½in slices.
2 Mix the remaining ingredients together and place in a large bowl. Microwave, covered with vented cling film, at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, stirring 2 or 3 times during cooking.

VARIATION
Sausages with cabbage for two: halve the dry ingredients and use 75ml / 3fl oz apple juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring once or twice during cooking.

Cook's notes

The cooking time will depend on how soft you like your cabbage — the lower times given (12 minutes for 4 and 8 minutes for 2) will leave the cabbage still fairly crunchy and with a bite to it.

Sausages and rice

18 mins

Standing time: none

8 sausages, weighing a total of 450g / 1lb
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
3 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
450g / 1lb cooked long grain rice (about 175g / 6oz raw weight)
15ml / 1tbls dark soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp beef extract, dissolved in a little boiling water
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages on a pre-heated browning dish or roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) as in chart.
2 Cut sausages into 2.5cm / 1in slices and place in a 1.1L / 2pt dish, pour over the Worcestershire sauce and stir to coat. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Drain on absorbent paper and discard any fat in bowl.
3 Add the celery, onion and green pepper, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Stir in cooked sausage pieces, rice, soy sauce and the beef extract. Season and mix well.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until heated through. Stir once halfway through cooking time.

VARIATION
Sausages and rice for two: halve quantities of dry ingredients; use 10ml / 2tsp each of Worcestershire sauce and dark soy sauce and 2.5ml / ½tsp beef extract. Microwave for 4 minutes in step 1, 3-4 minutes in step 2, and 2-3 minutes in step 3.

Sausage and sweetcorn bake

16 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

4 sausages, weighing a total of 225g / 8oz, cut into 2cm / ¾in slices
1 onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp dry mustard
large pinch of black pepper
125ml / 4fl oz milk
1 egg, lightly beaten
335g / 11.8oz can sweetcorn, drained

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages and the chopped onion in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave, covered with cling film rolled back at one edge, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the onion is transparent.
2 Stir in flour and seasonings. Add milk, beaten egg and sweetcorn. Mix together, then cover. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-18 minutes, or until set, rotating after half the cooking time.
3 Allow to stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.

Sausages and creamy potatoes

15½ mins

Standing time: none

8 sausages, weighing a total of 450g / 1lb, slit diagonally at 2.5cm / 1in intervals
450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
50ml / 2fl oz water
salt
85g / 3½oz full-fat soft cheese
125ml / 4fl oz milk
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
10ml / 2tsp snipped chives or chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds

SERVES 4

1 Place the sausages on a preheated browning dish or roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) as in chart, page 510.
2 Put potato slices and water in a large bowl. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for about 6 minutes or until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a skewer. Stir halfway through the cooking time. Drain and sprinkle with the salt.
3 Put the full-fat soft cheese into a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until softened. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until sauce has thickened, beating twice.
4 Put the potato slices in a 1.1L / 2pt baking dish and spoon over the sauce to cover the slices. Lay the sausages around the edge. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until sausages are heated through, giving the dish ½ turn halfway through the cooking time.

Sausages and Creamy Potatoes

Freezer desserts

Keep a selection of tempting desserts in your freezer, they take no time to thaw in the microwave. Produce them as lunch-time treats or supper party surprises.

Many types of desserts can be stored in the freezer, from custard or cream-based tarts to fruit-flavoured pies and mousses. When you have guests for supper and haven't time to make a three-course special, there's no need to worry about a dessert, just take out a ready-made one from the freezer and thaw it speedily in the microwave.

Custards cook beautifully in the microwave, never sticking and silky smooth. A crème caramel can be made up in one large dish or individual ramekins and frozen. Rice puddings are quicker to make in the microwave than conventionally, but will still take over 30 minutes. If you cook them in advance and freeze them, however, they can be thawed and ready to eat in under 15 minutes.

Fruit puddings freeze well. They can be made from fresh or frozen fruit and none of the fruit's flavour is lost during the

cooking as little water is used.

All the desserts here freeze well for 2-3 months. Freeze them in the container used for cooking. Or, line the dish with cling film and assemble and cook the dessert; cool, then open-freeze. Remove from the dish with the cling film, over-wrap with foil and return to the freezer. To thaw, unwrap and place in the original container.

Any decoration is best added after freezing and thawing. This avoids the risk of damage and ensures the dessert looks lusciously fresh and colourful.

Apricot Ring

Apricot ring

5 mins

Standing time: none

This iced dessert is lighter than ice cream and has a refreshing fruit flavour.

425g / 15oz can apricot halves in syrup, drained, reserving 45ml / 3tbls juice
3 eggs, separated
100g / 4oz caster sugar
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls apricot jam or orange marmalade
275ml / ½pt whipping or double cream, whipped

TO SERVE
225g / 8oz can apricot halves in syrup, drained
fresh mint leaves

SERVES 6-8

1 Purée the apricots and reserve. Beat the egg yolks and sugar in a large bowl until thick and pale. Mix in 45ml / 3tbls apricot juice, lemon juice and jam.
2 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes until smooth and thickened, stirring twice. Stir in the apricot purée and leave until cold.
3 Whisk the egg whites until stiff and fold into the cooled mixture with the whipped cream. Turn into a 1.4L / 2½pt ring mould, wrap, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the mould and dip into hand hot water for 15-30 seconds. Loosen the edges with a knife and turn out. Decorate with the apricot halves and mint.

Microtips

To make a large Crème Caramel, use a 575ml / 1pt dish. Prepare as directed, right, microwaving caramel for 4-5 minutes. Microwave the custard in the water bath for 4 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes until almost set. Thaw as directed.

Crème caramel

17½ mins

Standing time: none

CARAMEL
50g / 2oz caster sugar
20ml / 4tsp hot water

CUSTARD
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
1 whole egg
2 egg yolks
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

SERVES 4

1 To make the caramel, divide the sugar evenly between 4 ramekins; do not use plastic as the sugar reaches very high temperatures. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the sugar is hot. Remove dishes using oven gloves.
2 Stir 5ml / 1tsp hot water into each dish to dissolve the sugar. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the sugar caramelizes to a golden brown. Watch closely and remove dishes as soon as ready. Swirl the caramel around the dishes to coat the sides. Leave to set.
3 For the custard, blend the cornflour with a little milk in a medium bowl. Lightly whisk in the whole egg, egg yolks, and sugar. Microwave the remaining milk in a jug, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until hot. Gradually whisk into the egg mixture. Add the flavouring.
4 Pour the custard into the ramekins. Stand them in a shallow dish and pour in hot water to come halfway up the sides. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, until just set at the edges, rotating dishes once. Leave to cool in the water.
5 Wrap, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Unwrap and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Chill before serving if liked.

Almond cheesecakes

5 mins

Standing time: none

20g / ¾oz butter or margarine
2½ large digestive or wheatmeal biscuits, crushed
5ml / 1tsp demerara sugar

FILLING:
175g / 6oz full-fat soft cheese
50g / 2oz sugar
1 egg
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring

TOPPING:
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream
20ml / 4tsp brown sugar
1-2 drops almond flavouring
slivered almonds (optional)

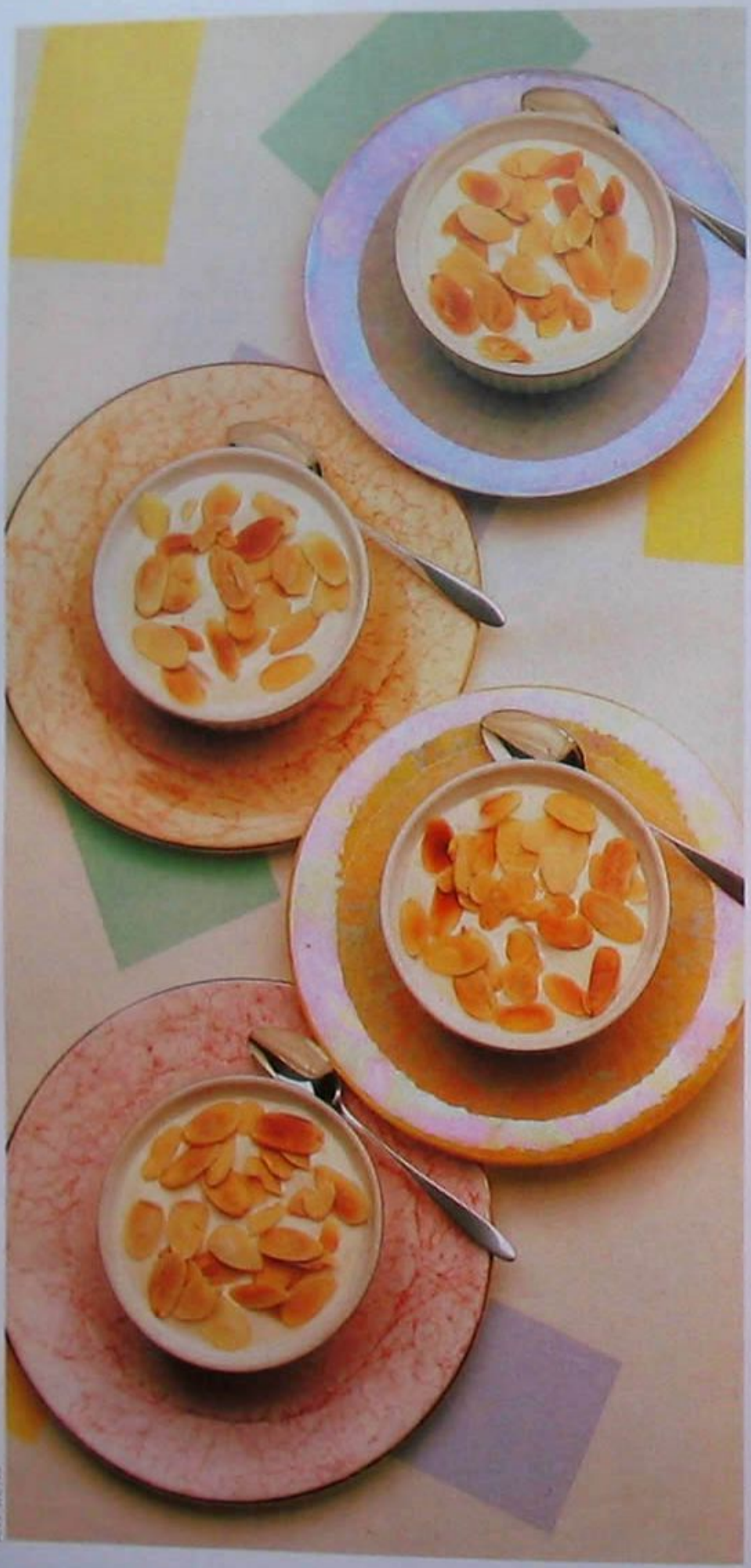
SERVES 4

1 Melt the butter in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Mix in the remaining crust ingredients until blended. Divide the mix between 4 ramekin dishes, 7.5cm / 3in in diameter. Press down to cover the base.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until just set.
3 In a small bowl, blend the cheese and sugar together. Mix in the egg and almond flavouring. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, or until thickened, blending with a whisk every minute. Pour into the ramekin dishes. Chill for at least 2 hours.
4 Blend the topping ingredients and spread over the cheesecakes. Sprinkle with the almonds if using. Wrap, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Unwrap cheesecakes and place in a circle on a plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes until a knife can be inserted easily into the centre. Leave to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Cook's notes

Use the base of a glass that is smaller than the ramekins to help press down the biscuit crumbs evenly and firmly into the ramekins.



RAY DUNN

Raspberry rhubarb pie

11 mins

Standing time: none

1 cooked 23cm / 9in shortcrust pastry case (see page 370)

FILLING
15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
65ml / 2½fl oz hot water
450g / 1lb fresh rhubarb, trimmed and chopped
100g / 4oz sugar
225g / 8oz frozen raspberries

TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls rolled oats
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg

SERVES 6

1 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a small bowl. Leave to soak for 5 minutes. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds.
2 Place the rhubarb in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until just tender, stirring 1-2 times during the cooking time.
3 Stir in the sugar. Add the frozen raspberries and dissolved gelatine. Pour into the pastry case and chill until set.
4 Mix the topping ingredients in a medium bowl, rubbing the butter into the sugar, oats, flour and nutmeg until crumbly. Sprinkle the mixture over the pie filling. Wrap, label and freeze for no longer than 2 months.

Microtips

To serve the Raspberry Rhubarb Pie immediately, cook the topping separately. Cover and microwave the butter in a shallow, wide dish at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted. Use a fork to stir in the remaining topping ingredients and microwave, uncovered, for 1½-2 minutes until crumbly, stirring once. Leave to cool, then sprinkle over the filling.

Raspberry Rhubarb Pie

TO SERVE
Unwrap the pie and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes until a skewer can be inserted into the centre easily; rotate dish several times. Let stand for 10-20 minutes and serve cold. If filling starts to over-soften at the edges, chill in the refrigerator.

Rice cream with coconut

26 mins

Standing time: none

65g / 2½oz short grain rice
37.5ml / 2½tbls sugar
575ml / 1pt milk
75ml / 5tbls shredded or desiccated coconut
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
65ml / 2½fl oz single cream or evaporated milk

SERVES 4

1 Put the rice, sugar and milk in a large bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes until the milk is just boiling. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 14-16 minutes until the rice swells and milk has reduced; stir 2-3 times.
2 Stir in the coconut and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes until the rice is soft, stirring twice. Stir in the flavouring and cream or evaporated milk.
3 Turn into 1 large or 4 small freezer / microwave containers and leave to cool. When cold, wrap, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the large container and microwave at 100% (High) for 5½ minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes, stirring once or twice. To serve 4 small containers, microwave at 100% (High) for 5½ minutes; 2 small containers for 3 minutes; 1 small container for 2 minutes.

Cook's notes

The pudding thickens on cooling. Therefore, when heating from frozen, stir in a little cream or milk to thin the pudding. To vary, add a few raisins during cooking.

Boned and stuffed chicken

For a really special occasion, why not consider serving a boned and stuffed chicken? Easy to carve and delicious to eat, it turns a buffet into a banquet.

Once you feel confident about microwave cooking, it's well worth experimenting with more adventurous dishes. A stuffed boned chicken works particularly well. The meat and stuffing stay moist, while the fast cooking, microwave method means there's extra time for boning and stuffing the bird and for concentrating on the glazes and garnish. Served cold, a stuffed boned chicken is ideal for buffets since it is easy to carve and goes much further than a whole roasted bird.

When boning, use a sharp kitchen knife with a narrow blade. Take your time and cut slowly, keeping the side of the blade flat against the carcass. Cut out the wing bones in the same way, keeping the knife close to the bone to avoid tearing the skin. Drumsticks can be removed if required.

The golden brown finish of the Fruit 'n' Nut Stuffed Chicken means it can be simply decorated and served. But for extra elegance, coat a plain bird with a smooth, rich *chaudfroid* sauce. These sauces are made hot but served cold. Prawns, radish, cucumber and blanched carrot and courgette can all be used to garnish the chicken. Cut the sliced vegetables into fancy shapes with tiny aspic cutters and arrange them neatly in place before the sauce sets.

Fruit 'n' Nut Stuffed Chicken

How to bone a chicken

Cut *off the wings at the second joint and the ends of the legs at first joint. Turn bird onto breast and cut cleanly along the backbone, through the skin and flesh to the bone.*

With *the knife blade flat against the carcass, carefully cut down, pulling the loosened flesh out with the free hand. Continue working down, until the thigh joint is reached.*

Hold *the chicken down securely and, keeping the knife blade against the bone, scrape all the meat away. Continue working towards the carcass until the drumstick joint is reached.*

Remove *drumsticks if a rounded shape is wanted. (For a conventional 'chicken' shape, leave drumsticks in place.) Scrape flesh away from the bone until the joint at the carcass is reached.*

Insert *point of knife into the joint and twist — the leg should then come away. Scrape flesh from wing bones and sever bones from the carcass. Repeat on the other side.*

Work *flesh free from ribs and breast bone. Lift out carcass. Lay chicken flat, legs and wings pushed into body. Slice flesh from thick portions to cover thin areas of skin.*

PAUL WEBSTER

Fruit 'n' nut stuffed chicken

74 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Plan to make this recipe the day before serving, since the chicken needs to be chilled for at least 8 hours.

1.6kg / 3½lb chicken, boned

STUFFING
75g / 3oz brown rice
½ chicken stock cube
225ml / 8fl oz boiling water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
1 large onion, very finely chopped
350g / 12oz lean minced pork
1 red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
50g / 2oz button mushrooms, finely chopped
50g / 2oz salted cashew nuts, chopped
25g / 1oz dried apricots or sultanas, finely chopped
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls white wine (optional)
finely grated zest of ½ orange
large pinch of fresh or dried thyme
salt and pepper

GLAZE
5ml / 1tsp gravy browning

SERVES 8-10

1 Combine rice, stock cube and boiling water in a large bowl; cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and continue cooking for 25 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

2 Place butter or margarine and chopped onion in a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until onion is tender.

3 Stir in pork and cook uncovered at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, then add red pepper and mushrooms and cook at 100% (High) for a further 4 minutes.

4 Combine the pork mixture with the rice and add the remaining stuffing ingredients, mixing thoroughly.

5 Place the boned chicken, skin side down, on a flat work surface, season with salt and pepper, then spread the stuffing evenly down the centre of the bird (see step 1, right).

6 Carefully pull the sides together, so they slightly overlap and sew the skin together. Tie round the rolled stuffed bird with string at about 5cm / 2in intervals, then finally tie right around the length of the bird (see step 2). Although stuffing is less likely to ooze out with microwave cooking, this is a good precaution.

7 Weigh the stuffed chicken and calculate cooking time, allowing 9-11 minutes to each 450g / 1lb (the weight will be approximately 1.8kg / 4lb).

8 Place the chicken stitched side up in an unsealed roasting bag on a roasting rack or on an upturned plate in a large shallow dish.

9 Microwave at 100% (High) for first 5 minutes of cooking time, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for remaining time, turning the dish every 10 minutes.

10 Halfway through cooking, remove the bird and drain the cooking juices from the bag and dish. It helps to wear rubber gloves when doing this since they help you feel and control the bird unlike thick oven gloves. Continue to cook in roasting bag, stitched side down.

11 Drain roasting dish again 10 minutes before end of cooking, reserving 15ml / 1tbls of the cooking juices. Mix this with the gravy browning and brush over chicken. Return bird to microwave and cook, uncovered, for the remaining cooking time.

12 Leave to cool, wrapped tightly in foil, then refrigerate overnight.

13 The following day, remove the foil and cut away the string. Serve garnished with watercress and orange slices.

How to stuff and tie a boned chicken

Push *the skin of boned legs and wings into body and lay the boned chicken, skin side down, on a work surface. Season the flesh with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Spread the stuffing evenly down the centre of the chicken.*

Pull *skin together to overlap. Oversew sides together with a large needle, threaded with a fine smooth thread. Fold the end pieces over and oversew skin together. Tie round stuffed bird with string at 5cm / 2in intervals, finally encircling bird from neck to tail. Leave long loose threads instead of knotting ends, as these pull out easily.*

Microtips

If the Chaudfroid sauce sets too firmly, it can be easily softened in the microwave. Place the bowl of sauce in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until softened, stirring gently several times.

Cool the sauce again until it reaches setting point. When it is the consistency of unwhipped double cream, coat the chicken, following the steps on page 521.

Chicken Chaudfroid

42 min

Standing time: none

1.6kg / 3½lb chicken, boned with drumsticks left in
275ml / ½pt Chaudfroid Sauce (see right)

STUFFING

6-8 celery or fennel stalks, finely chopped
50g / 2oz butter
225g / 8oz cooked peeled prawns (if frozen, microwave for 1 minute at 20%-30% (Defrost) to thaw)
1 egg, beaten
finely grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
100g / 4oz fresh white or brown breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp finely chopped fresh tarragon or 5ml / 1tsp dried
100g / 4oz cream cheese
salt and pepper

GARNISH

orange and lemon rind, fresh coriander, wispy fennel tips, radish and cucumber

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the celery or fennel in a bowl with the butter. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until celery is tender.

2 Add the prawns and cook at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Strain off the liquid and reserve.

3 Place egg in a large bowl, add celery and prawns together with the lemon zest and juice, breadcrumbs and tarragon. Cool slightly before beating in cream cheese. Season to taste.

4 Spread the boned chicken out, skin side down, then spoon the stuffing down the centre of the bird (see step 1, left).

5 Pull skin together and oversew (see step 2), so that stuffing is completely enclosed and there are no gaps. Weigh bird and calculate cooking time, allowing 9-10 minutes to each 450g / 1lb. It will weigh about 1.8kg / 4lb.

6 Arrange chicken in a shallow baking dish, stitched side down,

and pat back into shape. Cross drumsticks over back of body and tie to hold in place.

7 Cover loosely with roasting bag, placed over top of chicken and microwave at 50% (Medium) for calculated time, turning dish ¼ turn every 10 minutes.

8 Strain cooking liquid and reserve for the Chaudfroid Sauce. Cool bird, cover with cling film and refrigerate overnight. Remove the string.

9 The next day, make the Chaudfroid Sauce (see below). Refrigerate sauce until thickened and on the point of setting. While sauce is setting design and prepare decorations. Cut out orange peel and radish into petal shapes, using an aspic cutter. Use thin coriander to make 'stalks'.

10 Place chicken on a wire rack and, working quickly, coat evenly with the sauce.

11 Garnish the chicken before the sauce has set. (It firms up quite fast so you need to work quickly.) Return the chicken to the refrigerator, until needed. Serve the same day.

Chaudfroid sauce

2¾ mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
chicken cooking liquid, reserved
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
prawn cooking liquid, reserved
a little milk (optional)
30ml / 2tbls double cream

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Sprinkle gelatine over 60ml / 4tbls chicken cooking liquid in a cup. Leave to soak.

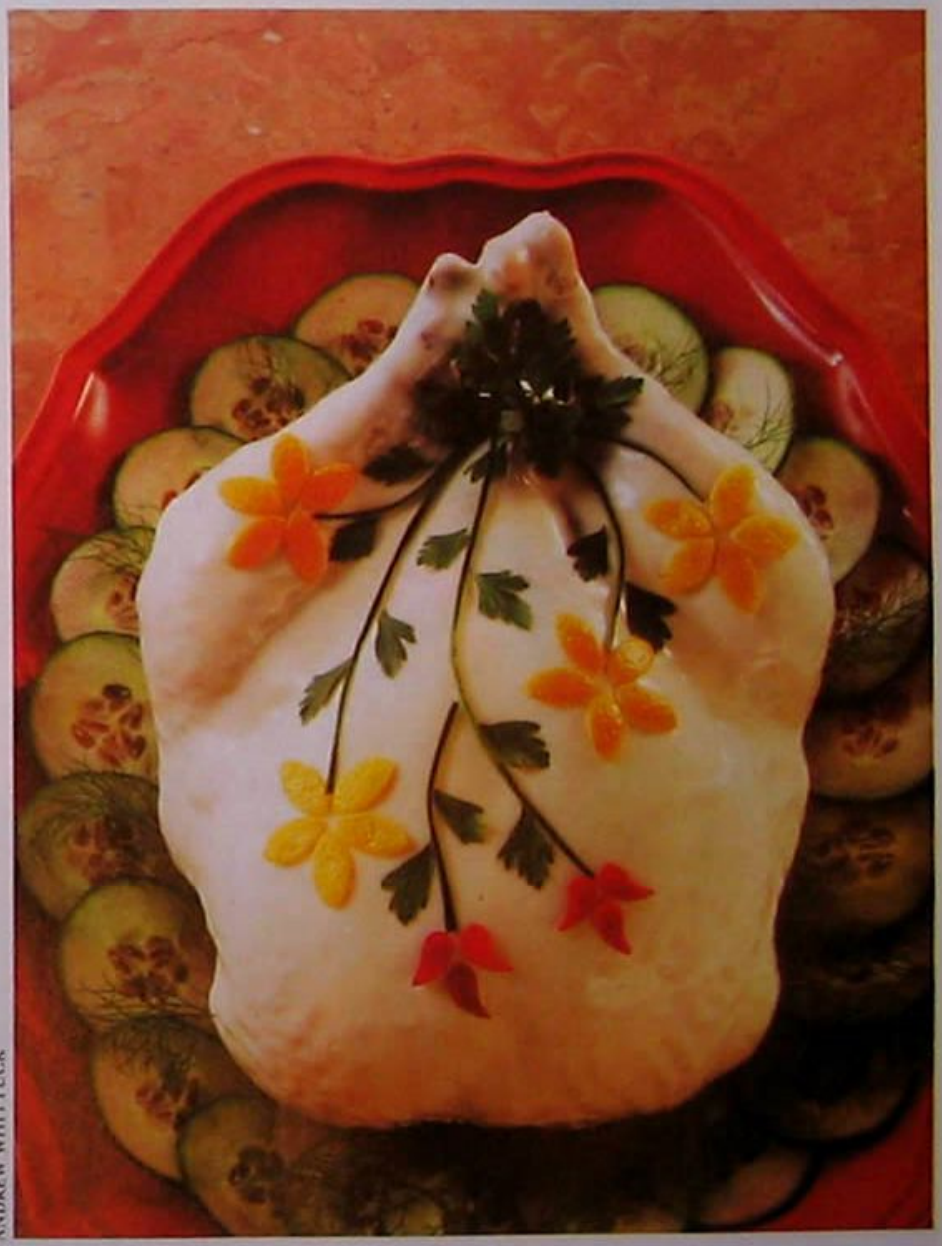
2 Meanwhile, melt butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Blend in flour, then remaining chicken liquid and prawn liquid made up to 275ml / ½pt if necessary. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until boiling. Stir every minute. Cool.

3 Microwave gelatine at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Stir to dissolve. Mix into sauce with the cream and season.

How to coat a chicken with Chaudfroid sauce

Chill *the sauce until it has thickened and is on the point of setting. It should have the consistency of unwhipped double cream.*

Using *a large spoon, carefully pour the sauce over the chicken from the head to the tail end. Work quickly before the Chaudfroid sauce sets.*



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Vegetable combinations

A dish of brightly coloured mixed vegetables is simply stunning — yet so easy in the microwave; just put everything into one container, or arrange on a serving plate, and cook.

Once you have mastered basic vegetable cookery in the microwave, try your hand at some creative combinations. Mixing and matching vegetables provides scope for all sorts of appetizing new dishes.

The secret is to select vegetables that have similar cooking times, so they can be microwaved together. If using vegetables that vary in their cooking time, start the slower vegetables in the microwave first and add the speedier ones as necessary. Or arrange all the vegetables in circles on a plate with the denser, more time-consuming ones to the edges, as in the Seasoned Vegetable Tray (see page 524). There is less microwave energy in the centre so the vegetables take longer to cook.

To start with, try a vegetable stir-fry (see page 525), which is always a popular choice. For a really colourful dish, try the Celery Corn Medley (opposite), or the Marinated Vegetables (see page 524). As you gain experience and confidence you will enjoy selecting your own mixtures.

Seasoned Vegetable Tray

Okra creole

13½ mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz fresh okra
65ml / 2½fl oz water
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
396g / 14oz can tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls red wine or reserved cooking liquid from the okra
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
good pinch of cayenne pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls chopped fresh parsley or 5ml / 1tsp dried
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Trim and wash the okra and place in a large bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until tender-crisp; stir once. Drain and set aside, reserving liquid if using.
2 In the same bowl, blend cornflour, a little juice from the tomatoes, the wine or okra liquid, paprika, sugar and cayenne. Mix in the tomatoes and the remaining juice, garlic and parsley. Season.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until thickened, stirring 1-2 times. Stir in the okra, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.

Celery corn medley

9½ mins

Standing time: none

396g / 14oz can tomatoes, well drained
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried mixed herbs
15ml / 1tbls grated onion
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 celery stalks, sliced
½ small green pepper, seeded and chopped
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp tomato ketchup
salt and pepper
340g / 12oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced with stems

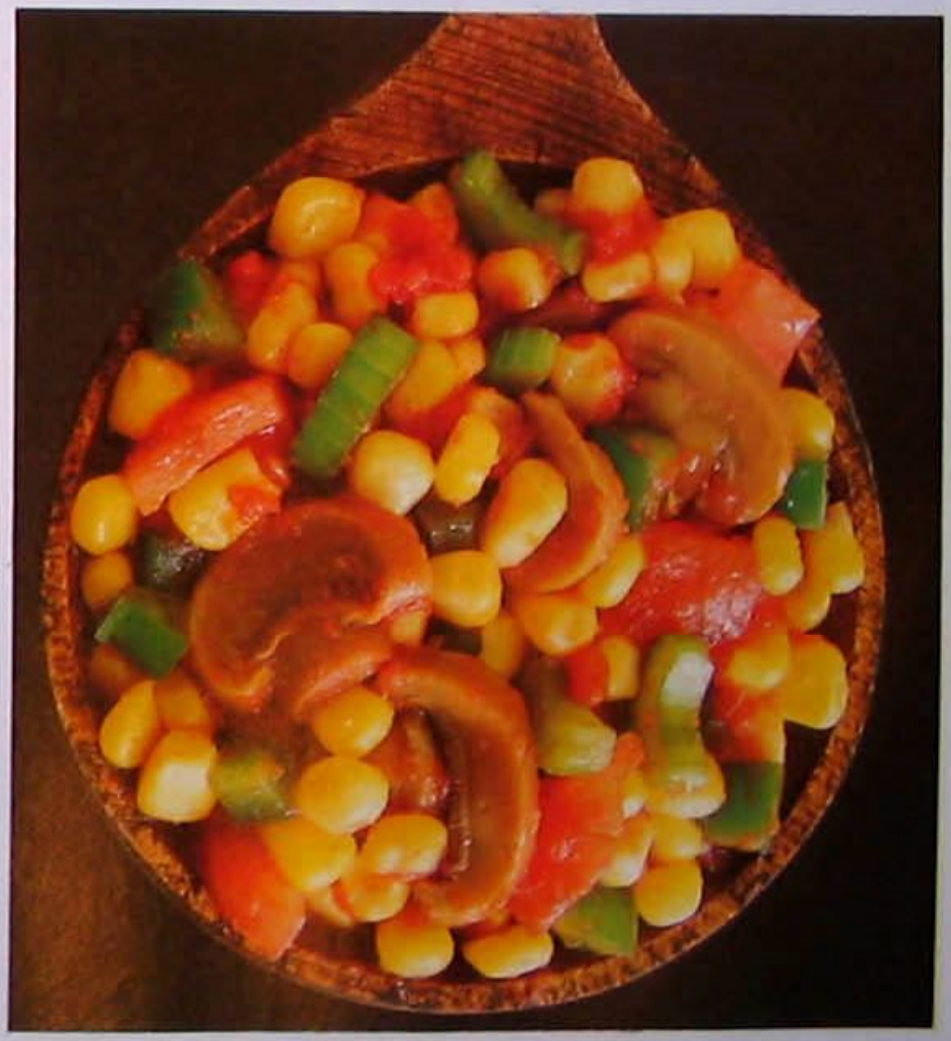
SERVES 4

1 Put the tomatoes into a large bowl with the herbs, onion and garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, until thick and pulpy, stirring twice.
2 Combine the celery, pepper and oil in a medium bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender, stirring once. Strain off the liquid.
3 Stir the sugar, ketchup, seasoning and all the vegetables, including the sweetcorn and mushrooms, into the tomato sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until hot, stirring once.

Below: *Celery Corn Medley*
Above left: *Okra Creole*

Microtips

Cooked fresh corn can be used in place of canned. Scrape the kernels off the cob and cook with the celery and pepper in Step 2, adding 30ml / 2tbls water. Continue as directed in the recipe.



Seasoned vegetable tray

7½ mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

Serve this appetizing array of vegetables either hot or cold, as an accompaniment to a main course or a tempting appetizer.

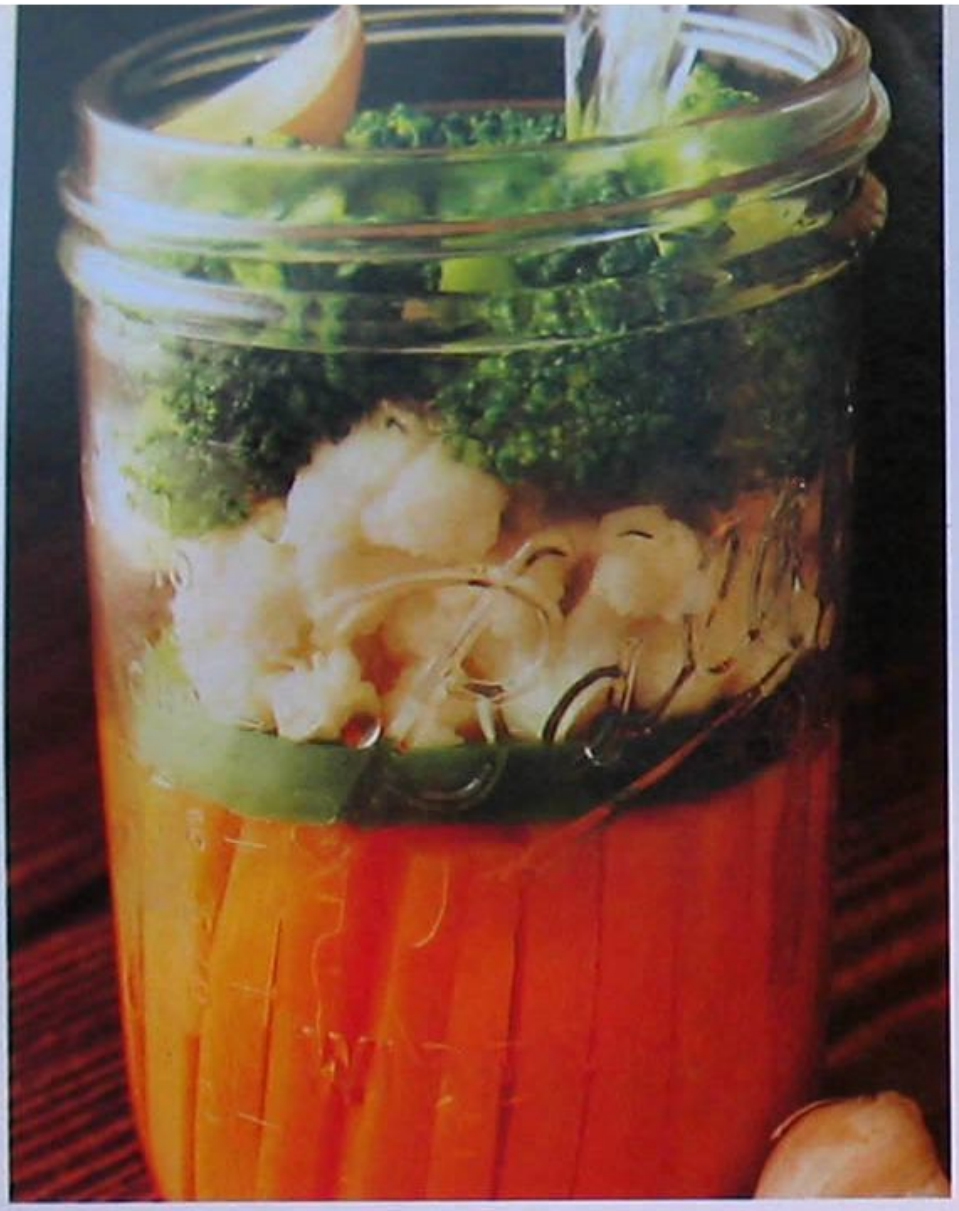
2 carrots, sliced diagonally
150g / 5oz cauliflower florets
150g / 5oz broccoli florets
1 small swede, cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
1 small courgette, sliced
1 tomato, cut into 6 wedges
30ml / 2tbls water

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
2.5ml / ½tsp onion salt
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the vegetables on a 25-30cm / 10-12in plate. Place the carrots around the outside, then make a ring of cauliflower florets, followed by a ring of broccoli. Add the swede, followed by the courgette in the centre, as they require the least cooking time. Sprinkle with the water and cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until all the vegetables are tender-crisp, rotating the plate 2-3 times.
3 Arrange the tomato wedges at intervals on the cauliflower or broccoli ring, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 3-4 minutes, while preparing the sauce.
4 Microwave butter in a small jug, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted and hot. Stir in cheese, onion salt and pepper.
5 Drain the vegetables carefully, then pour the sauce over them.

VARIATION
Use fresh pumpkin, squash or turnips in place of the swede, or another vegetable in season. Remember to cut the vegetables into evenly thick slices to ensure even cooking.



Marinated Vegetables

Marinated vegetables

9 mins

Standing time: none

425ml / 15fl oz white wine vinegar
65g / 2½oz sugar
5ml / 1tsp salt
5 carrots, peeled and cut into matchstick strips, about 5cm / 2in long and 6mm / ¼in thick
100g / 4oz cauliflower florets
100g / 4oz broccoli florets
2 rings of green pepper, about 12mm / ½in wide
150ml / ¼pt water
2 garlic cloves

MAKES 2 x 575ml / 1pt JARS

1 Pour the vinegar into a 1L / 1¾pt jug; add the sugar and salt. Cover with cling film rolled back and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until boiling, then continue boiling for 1 minute.
2 Uncover and leave until cold. Place the carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, pepper rings and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until the vegetables are tender-crisp and brightly coloured; stir once. Drain and rinse under cold water to retain crispness and colour. Drain on absorbent paper.
3 Arrange the carrot strips in two 450g / 1lb glass jars, standing them upright. Add the pepper rings, then cauliflower and broccoli florets. Put a garlic clove into each jar, then pour in the cooled vinegar to cover the vegetables.
4 Cover and leave in the refrigerator for 4 days to marinate before serving. Serve with cold meats or bread and cheese and store in the refrigerator up to 4 weeks.

Stir-fried vegetables

5 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
275g / 10oz cauliflower florets
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced, with stalks
a bunch of spring onions, sliced (including green tops)
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
15g / ½oz butter or margarine

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

Browning the butter first gives a nutty flavour to the cauliflower and almonds. However, if preferred, add the butter to the browning dish after it has been heated.

Soy sauce gives the vegetables spice; it also colours the cauliflower quite brown. For less colour, dip the florets briefly in the sauce before cooking and add less of the sauce during cooking. Soy sauce is salty; do not add extra salt.

How to microwave Stir-fried vegetables

Combine *the soy sauce, cornflour and sugar in a large bowl. Stir in the cauliflower, mushrooms, onions and almonds. Set aside while preheating a browning dish in the cooker.*

Preheat *the browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add butter for the last 30 seconds. Stir in vegetables and sauce.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the cauliflower is tender but crisp; stir once during the cooking time. Let stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.*

Summer buffet

A summer buffet party for eight needn't be a daunting prospect with careful planning and your microwave helping you to cook everything to perfection. Set out the food, relax and enjoy the company of friends.

Hot lazy summer days cry out for party spreads of delicately flavoured cold food. This summer menu starts with a chilled soup which can be prepared in advance.

Trout is the centrepiece of the meal. Individual fish make the serving easy but if you prefer to cook large trout, buy two 1.1-1.6kg / 2½-3½lb fish. Microwave in the poaching liquor, one at a time, at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes. Wrap the head and tail in a little foil for the first half of the cooking time to prevent over-cooking. Colourful cooked salads complement the main course.

Strawberries and cream sandwiched in a moist shortcake, make a mouthwatering dessert.

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Countdown

The day before
Cook trout; cool in liquor. Cover when cold and store in the refrigerator.

Make the soup, strain and store covered in the refrigerator. Prepare the pasta salad dressing and store in the refrigerator.

Early on the day
Skin the fish and prepare the cucumber and lemon slices for garnishing; store covered. Prepare and cook the Bean and Cauliflower salad; leave coated in dressing. Cook pasta, blanch peppers. Cook shortcake; leave to cool.

Just before the guests arrive
Arrange salads, lay out fish, finish cake, stir lemon juice into the soup and top with lemon slices.

Iced beetroot soup

45 mins

Standing time: none

1.4kg / 3lb raw beetroot, peeled and diced
2.3L / 4pt boiling water
3 chicken stock cubes
2 large onions, peeled and halved
6 cloves
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 bouquet garni
15ml / 1tbls sugar
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
orange slices, to garnish

SERVES 8

1 Put the beetroot, water, stock cubes, onions, cloves, garlic, bouquet garni and sugar into a 3.4L / 6pt bowl.
2 Microwave, uncovered, for 20 minutes at 100% (High), stir once.
3 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 25 minutes.
4 Strain the soup through a fine sieve. Season to taste and chill.
5 Just before serving, stir in orange juice and garnish.

Poached trout

26 mins

Standing time: none

The quantity of poaching liquor will cook 2 large trout or two batches of 4 small trout.

8 trout, about 175g-225g / 6-8oz each
cucumber and lemon slices, to garnish

POACHING LIQUOR
150ml / ¼pt white wine
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
1 sprig parsley
1 bay leaf
2 peppercorns
275ml / ½pt water

SERVES 8

1 Put half poaching ingredients into a large shallow dish (big enough to hold four of the trout).
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Add four fish, cover and microwave for 7-9 minutes at 100% (High).
3 Remove from the cooker and leave to cool. Stir several times.
4 Repeat this with the remaining fish and fresh poaching liquor.
5 To serve the fish, remove from liquor and remove skin. Garnish with cucumber and lemon.
6 Serve with green mayonnaise. (see recipe, below).

Green mayonnaise

4 mins

Standing time: none

1 bunch watercress
small bunch of parsley
575ml / 1pt mayonnaise

SERVES 8

1 Remove the tough stalks from the watercress and the parsley.
2 Rinse the parsley and watercress under cold running water. Place in a bowl with 30ml / 2tbls water.
3 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.
4 Drain off all the water and chop finely by hand or in a processor.
5 Wrap the watercress and parsley in a teatowel and gently squeeze until all the moisture has been removed.
6 Mix the parsley and watercress into the mayonnaise. Chill before serving with the trout.

Bean and cauliflower salad

19½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb baby green beans
1 cauliflower, broken into florets
1 egg

DRESSING
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
15ml / 1tbls made mustard
3-4 drops of Tabasco
90ml / 6tbls red wine vinegar
120ml / 8tbls olive oil
150ml / ¼pt vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls chopped chervil

SERVES 8

1 Cook beans and cauliflower as directed on pages 75 and 119. Leave both to stand for 5 minutes.
2 Break the egg into a small dish and prick yolk. Add 15ml / 1tbls hot water. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes. Drain and stand until cold.
3 Mix dressing ingredients together. Chop the egg white and mix into the dressing.
4 Drain beans and cauliflower and pour half of the dressing over each. Toss thoroughly and leave to chill, covered.
5 Just before serving, toss vegetables again and arrange on a large platter in a decorative pattern. Sieve the egg yolk over the top to garnish.

Pasta salad

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb pasta spirals
1.4L / 2½pt boiling water, salted
1 yellow pepper, cut into rings
1 red pepper, cut into thin strips
1 green pepper, cut into squares

DRESSING:
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
15ml / 1tbls made mustard
90ml / 6tbls lemon juice
120ml / 8tbls olive oil
150ml / ¼pt vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls chopped basil

SERVES 8

1 Place the pasta in a large bowl with boiling salted water.
2 Microwave covered at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, until just tender.
3 Rinse well and set aside.
4 Place the seeded and cut peppers in a bowl with 90ml / 6tbls water. Microwave, covered, for 5 minutes at 100% (High). Stand for 5 minutes, then rinse in cold water.
5 To make dressing, combine all the ingredients and mix well. This could be done by shaking in a sealed jar.
6 To serve, combine pasta, peppers and dressing. Toss well.

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Strawberry shortcake

7 mins

Standing time: none

Cook this cake the same day you wish to serve it and fill just before serving time.

275g / 10oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
100g / 4oz butter, diced
90g / 3½oz soft brown sugar
grated zest of 1 orange
1 egg, beaten
30-45ml / 2-3tbls milk
450g / 1lb strawberries
425ml / ¾pt whipping cream

SERVES 8

1 Sift flour and salt. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in the sugar and the orange zest. Using a round-bladed knife, stir in the egg, a little at a time.
2 Stir in the milk and knead lightly into a smooth dough.
3 Press dough into a prepared 25cm / 10in flan dish. Place dish on an inverted saucer and microwave for 7-9 minutes at 100% (High).
4 Turn out onto a cooling tray and leave until cold before slicing in half horizontally.
5 Thinly slice half the strawberries; cut the rest in half. Whip the cream.
6 Fill the shortcake with sliced strawberries and half the whipped cream. Top with the remaining cream and strawberries.

Cook's notes

To ensure that the shortcake comes easily out of the dish, grease the dish lightly and line with greaseproof paper. Let paper stand above the edges so the cake can be lifted out.

Meatballs

Meatballs in a microwave make a tasty, filling meal — in minutes. Serve them with baked beans for a plain family supper or, for an extra special occasion, add an Oriental touch with a sweet and sour sauce.

Meatballs can be made from any lean minced meat to provide a nourishing meal. The basic meatball recipe (see page 530) makes 12 large meatballs, or 20 small.

On the whole, meatballs cook faster in a circle. If in rows, rearrange them during cooking. This applies particularly to small meatballs: these should be moved from the outside of the dish to the inside, and vice versa, to ensure even cooking throughout. This will prevent the meatballs losing moisture.

Gingered Meatballs

How to microwave Basic meatballs

Basic mixture

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 egg, beaten
1 onion, finely chopped
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp dried basil or dried mixed herbs
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt

SERVES 4

Large meatballs:	6-7	mins
Small meatballs:	7-8	mins
Standing time:	2	mins

Combine *meatball ingredients. Shape into 12 large or 20 small meatballs with wetted hands.*

Arrange *the large meatballs in a circle in a 25cm / 10in round shallow dish. Place the smaller meatballs in neat rows in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in oblong shallow dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for required time; rotate dish and turn meatballs over. Rearrange small meatballs halfway through cooking time. Drain. Stand for 2 minutes.*

For *saucy meatballs, add 225g / 8oz can tomato sauce and 60ml / 4tbls milk halfway through cooking. Cover and microwave for remaining time. Stand for 2 minutes.*

Gingered mini meatballs

11 mins

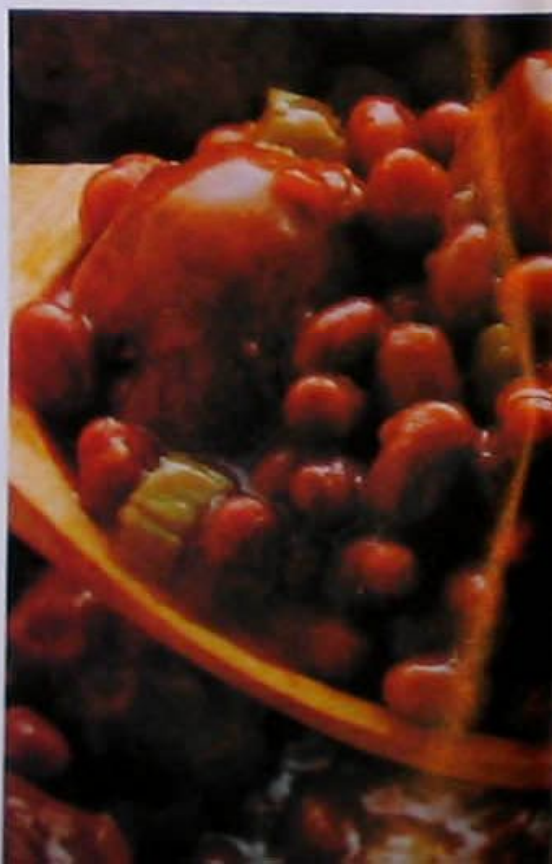
Standing time: 4-5 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
45ml / 3tbls finely chopped spring onion
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
200ml / 7½fl oz water
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp white wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls dried parsley

SERVES 4

1 Mix together beef, breadcrumbs, onion, garlic, ginger, egg and seasoning. Shape into 36 balls and arrange in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, rotating and turning twice. Drain, put into a serving dish; let stand for 4-5 minutes.
3 Mix sauce ingredients in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice.
4 Pour over meatballs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.



Meatballs and baked beans

13 mins

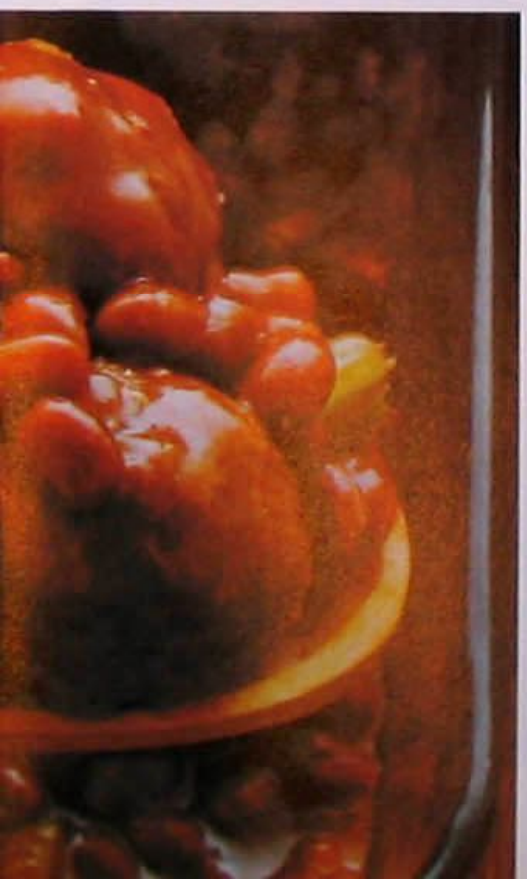
Standing time: 2 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls horseradish sauce
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper
1 onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
732g / 28.2oz can baked beans in tomato sauce
75ml / 2½fl oz tomato ketchup
15ml / 1tbls black treacle

SERVES 4

1 Mix together beef, breadcrumbs, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, egg and seasoning.
2 Shape into 20 balls and arrange in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish. Add onion and celery.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, rotating and turning twice. Drain.
4 Mix beans, ketchup and treacle into meatballs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes. Stand 2 minutes.

Right: *Lamb Meatballs with Dill Sauce*
Below: *Meatballs and Baked Beans*



Lamb meatballs with dill sauce

12¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

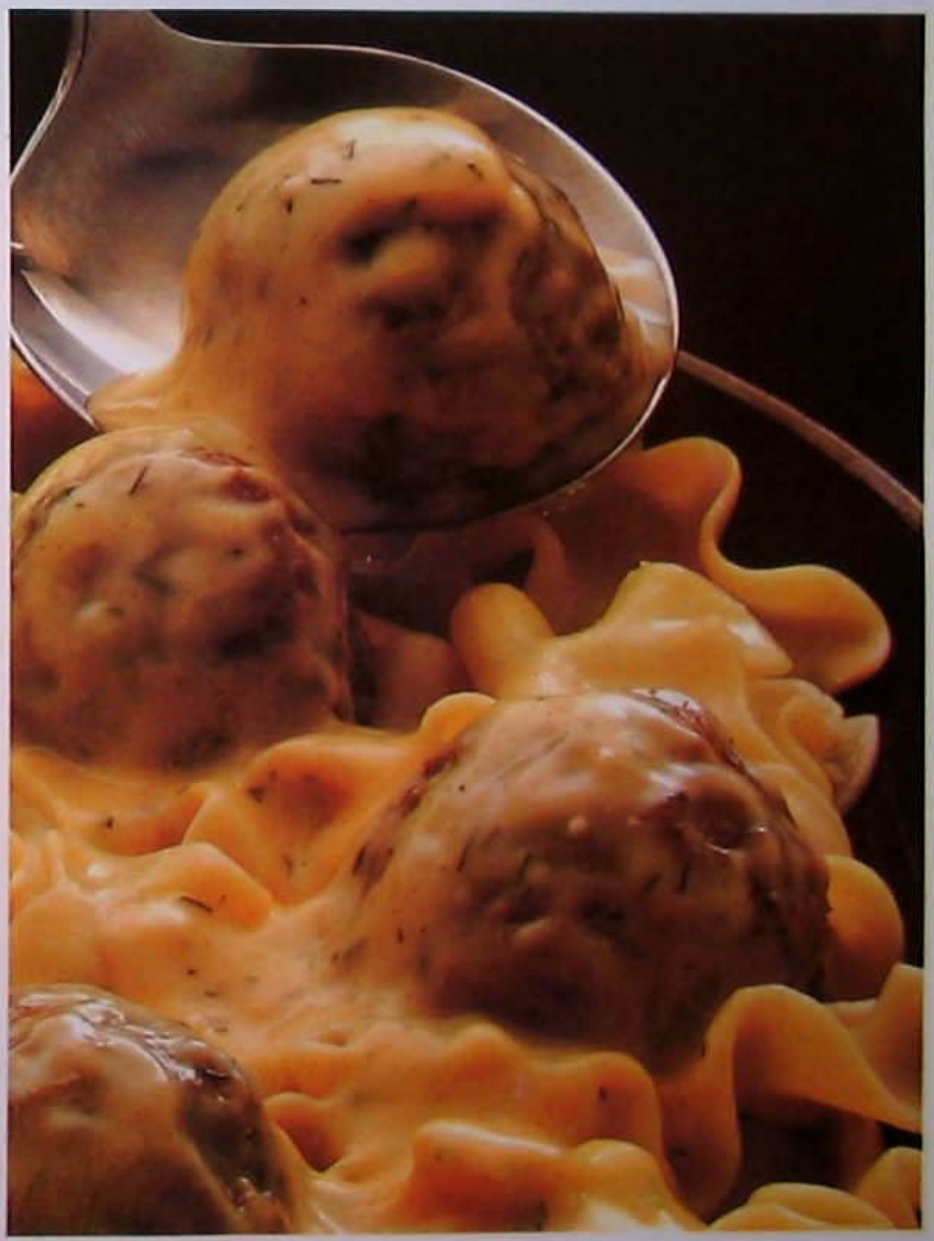
175g / 6oz noodles
25g / 1oz butter

MEATBALLS
450g / 1lb lean minced lamb
60ml / 4tbls quick cooking oats
1 onion, finely chopped
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp dill weed
3.7ml / ¾tsp paprika
300ml / ½pt milk
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Cook noodles conventionally.
2 Combine meatball ingredients. Form 20 balls; arrange in a dish.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, rotating dish and turning meatballs twice. Drain and let stand for 5 minutes.
4 Melt butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in remaining sauce ingredients; microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Whisk after first 2 minutes, then after each minute.
5 Drain noodles, toss with butter and turn into a serving dish. Top with meatballs and sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.



Sweet and sour meatballs

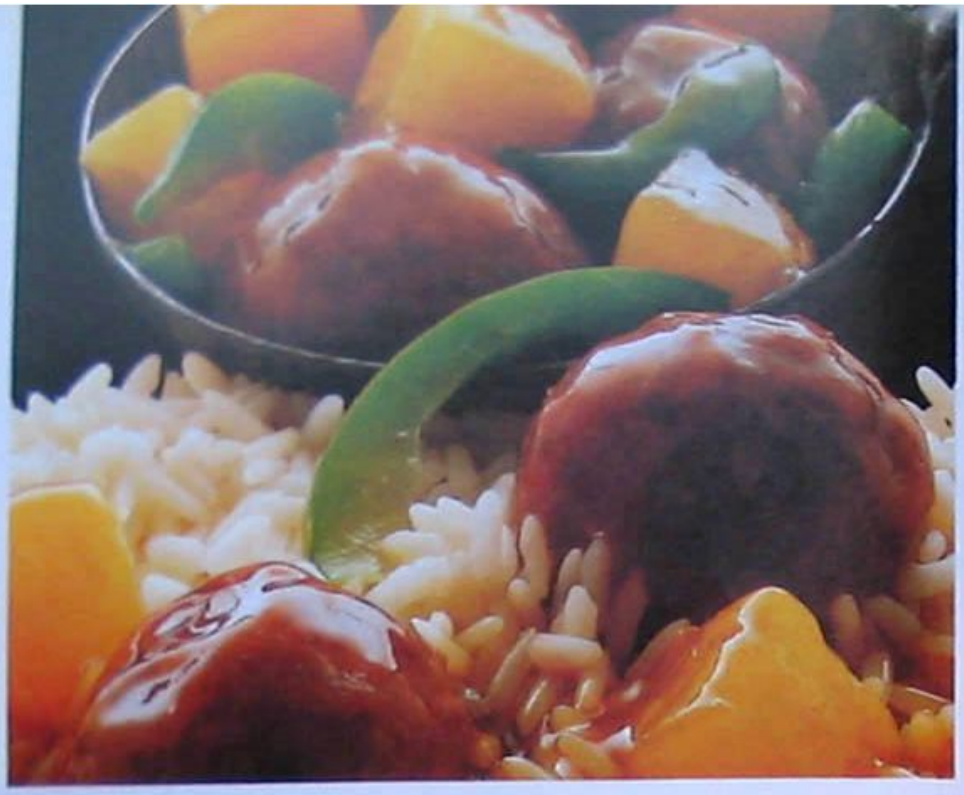
16 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

425g / 15oz can pineapple chunks
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
60ml / 12tsp cornflour
225ml / 7½fl oz cider vinegar
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce

MEATBALLS
225g / 8oz lean minced beef
225g / 8oz lean minced pork
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
1 green pepper, thinly sliced
225g / 8oz cooked rice, to serve

SERVES 4



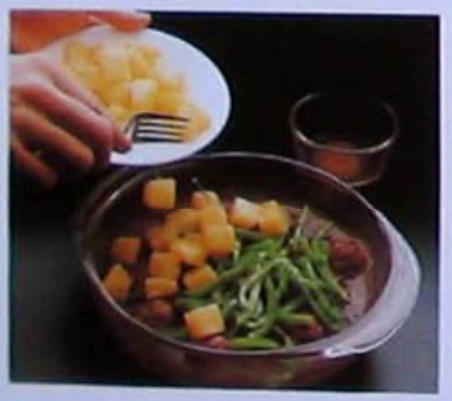
How to microwave Sweet and sour meatballs

Drain *the pineapple well and make up the juice to 375ml / 12½fl oz with water. Combine all the remaining sauce ingredients in a casserole dish.*

Microwave *sauce at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes or until mixture is thick and glossy, whisking well twice during cooking.*

Mix *the beef and pork, breadcrumbs, beaten egg, and soy sauce together. Shape into 20 balls and arrange in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.*

Add *green pepper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until meat loses its pink colour, rotating and rearranging meatballs twice.*



Drain *off any fat from the meatballs. Stand for 2 minutes. Add meatballs, green pepper and pineapple chunks to the sweet and sour sauce mixture.*

Stir *lightly until mixture is well combined. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until mixture is heated through. Serve hot with rice.*

Combination cookers 2

A cooker which works with microwave speed, yet produces the finish of conventionally cooked food in one simple operation can only be a bonus. Find out how to use it to full advantage.

The most sophisticated form of high speed cooking combines the cooking methods of convection hot air and microwave, not only in the one oven cavity, but also in the same process.

In this type of combination cooker you can use three methods of cooking: by microwave alone; by hot air convection alone; or by a combination of the two simultaneously. This unique method of cooking food gives an end result which is indistinguishable from conventionally cooked foods but is achieved in a fraction of the time.

Some combination cookers also have a grill facility which can be used simultaneously with microwaves for attractive results.

Haddock and Prawn Cobbler

RAY DUNS

When using the combination method of cooking you must not pre-heat the convection oven. At the beginning of the cooking process it is the high speed cooking by microwave which is important; the moisture released from the food is removed through the vents by the circulating hot air. The temperature of the hot air will increase gradually so that it reaches the set temperature in time to brown and crisp the food as it is completely cooked. In this respect the food is cooked when it looks as if it is and no standing time is necessary when the food has been removed from the cooker.

Various accessories will be supplied with your combination cooker and metal shelves, if provided, can be used safely as the microwave magnetron is protected. However, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully as you may only be able to use certain accessories in the combination setting and watch that they do not touch the sides of the cooker cavity.

A wire rack or metal grid is a must for some baked items, allowing the hot air to circulate freely around the food. Some models provide a baking sheet, glass tray, turntable and splash trivet. The trivet is used when dry roasting a joint on the rack or grid which is placed on the turntable. The juices from the roast collect in the turntable and are protected from too much microwave energy during the cooking process.

There are certain foods which do not benefit from being cooked by the combination method. When food cooks very quickly by microwave the hot air temperature will not rise sufficiently quickly for there to be any benefit either in the final appearance of the food or in the cooking time.

However all types of pastries, pies, flans, tarts, roasts, cakes, puddings and casseroles benefit from the combination method of cooking. Frozen pies and convenience foods also work well.

Do

- Use heatproof glassware, ceramic, earthenware and china cookware (without metallic trim) in the combination cooker.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions on using metal containers — they can be used in some models, but they will reduce efficiency and increase cooking time.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions on using accessories supplied.

Don't

- Preheat the convection oven. A gradual build-up of heat is essential in this form of combination cooking.
- Use plastic microwave or mercury thermometers in the combination cooker. Use a normal conventional thermometer with a spirit level rather than a mercury scale — but do not let it touch the walls of the oven or the wire rack at any time during the cooking process.

Cinnamon Apple Turnover; Victoria Sandwich Cake

Combination cooker models
There are several different types of combination cookers. The recipes in this chapter have been tested in 700W cookers which have Combination High, Medium and Low settings equalling 100% (High), 50% (Medium) and 20-30% (Defrost). The settings are used in combination with temperature settings ranging between 160°C and 250°C. The recipe instructions do not suit all combination cooker models. If in any doubt check your manufacturer's instructions.

RAY DUNS

Yorkshire puddings

16 mins

Standing time: none

Individual Yorkshire puddings are a traditional British accompaniment for roast beef.

100g / 4oz plain flour
pinch of salt
2 eggs
300ml / ½pt milk

MAKES 6

1 Grease six individual ramekins.
2 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the eggs. Mix, gradually drawing the flour into the eggs, to make a thick paste. Gradually add the milk, beating well to make a smooth batter.
3 Pour equal amounts into the ramekins. Place on the wire rack on the turntable.
4 Cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 250°C for 16-17 minutes until they are risen and golden. Serve at once.

Cinnamon apple turnovers

14 mins

Standing time: none

A turnover is a pastry 'envelope' which lies flat and has a sweet filling.

450g / 1lb frozen puff pastry, thawed
450g / 1lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and cubed
45ml / 3tbls demerara sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz raisins
beaten egg to glaze
caster sugar to sprinkle

MAKES 4

1 Cut the pastry into quarters and roll out each portion on a lightly floured surface to a 23cm / 9in round. Trim the edges.
2 Toss the apple cubes with the sugar, cinnamon and raisins. Spoon a quarter of the mixture on to one half of each pastry round.
3 Dampen the pastry edges with water or beaten egg. Fold the unfilled half of the pastry over to enclose the filling. Seal the edges with a fork or flute attractively. Brush with beaten egg to glaze, then sprinkle with a little caster sugar. Decorate with pastry trimmings, if liked.
4 Make a small slash in the top of each turnover to allow the steam to escape.
5 Place the turnovers directly on the wire rack on the turntable. Cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 250°C for 14 minutes. Serve warm or cold, with cream.

Victoria sandwich

10 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz softened butter or margarine
225g / 8oz caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
225g / 8oz self-raising flour, sifted
60ml / 4tbls jam
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped

SERVES 6-8

1 Lightly grease and base-line two 20cm / 8in round cake sandwich or pie dishes with greaseproof paper.
2 Cream the soft butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs with a little of the flour, then carefully fold in the remaining flour with a large metal spoon. Divide between the two prepared dishes and level each surface.
3 Place one dish directly on the turntable, and the second on the wire rack above. Cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 250°C for 10-15 minutes until risen and golden. Remove top cake a few minutes before lower cake to prevent over-browning. Remove wire rack and finish cooking bottom cake.
4 Turn out on to a wire rack and remove lining paper. When cold, sandwich the cakes together with jam and cream.

Haddock and prawn cobbler

23 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb haddock, skinned, boned and cut into bite-sized pieces
15ml / 1tbls seasoned flour
50g / 2oz butter, cut into small pieces
1 onion, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
425g / 15oz can tomatoes, coarsely chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
100g / 4oz cooked peeled prawns
225ml / 8fl oz fish stock
salt and pepper

COBBLER TOPPING
200g / 7oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, diced
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
150ml / ¼pt milk
milk to glaze

SERVES 4-6

1 Toss the haddock in the flour and place in a large casserole. Add the butter, onion, garlic, celery and green pepper. Place on the turntable. Cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 250°C for 5 minutes.
2 Remove from the oven and stir in the tomatoes and their juices, tomato purée, oregano, prawns, stock and salt and pepper to taste. Return to the cooker and cook at Combination Low, temperature setting 250°C for 10-14 minutes, until the fish mixture is almost cooked, stirring once.
3 Meanwhile, make the cobbler topping. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Rub in the butter or margarine until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the herbs and milk and mix to a soft, but manageable, dough. Turn on to a lightly-floured surface and knead until smooth. Roll out to about 12mm / ½in thick and stamp out 11 rounds using a 6.5cm / 2½in cutter.
4 Remove the casserole from the oven and arrange the scones around the top edge of the dish, so that each overlaps the next slightly. Brush with milk to glaze the scones.
5 Cook at Combination Low, temperature setting 250°C for 8-10 minutes until the topping is risen and golden.

Toad-in-the-Hole

Toad-in-the-hole

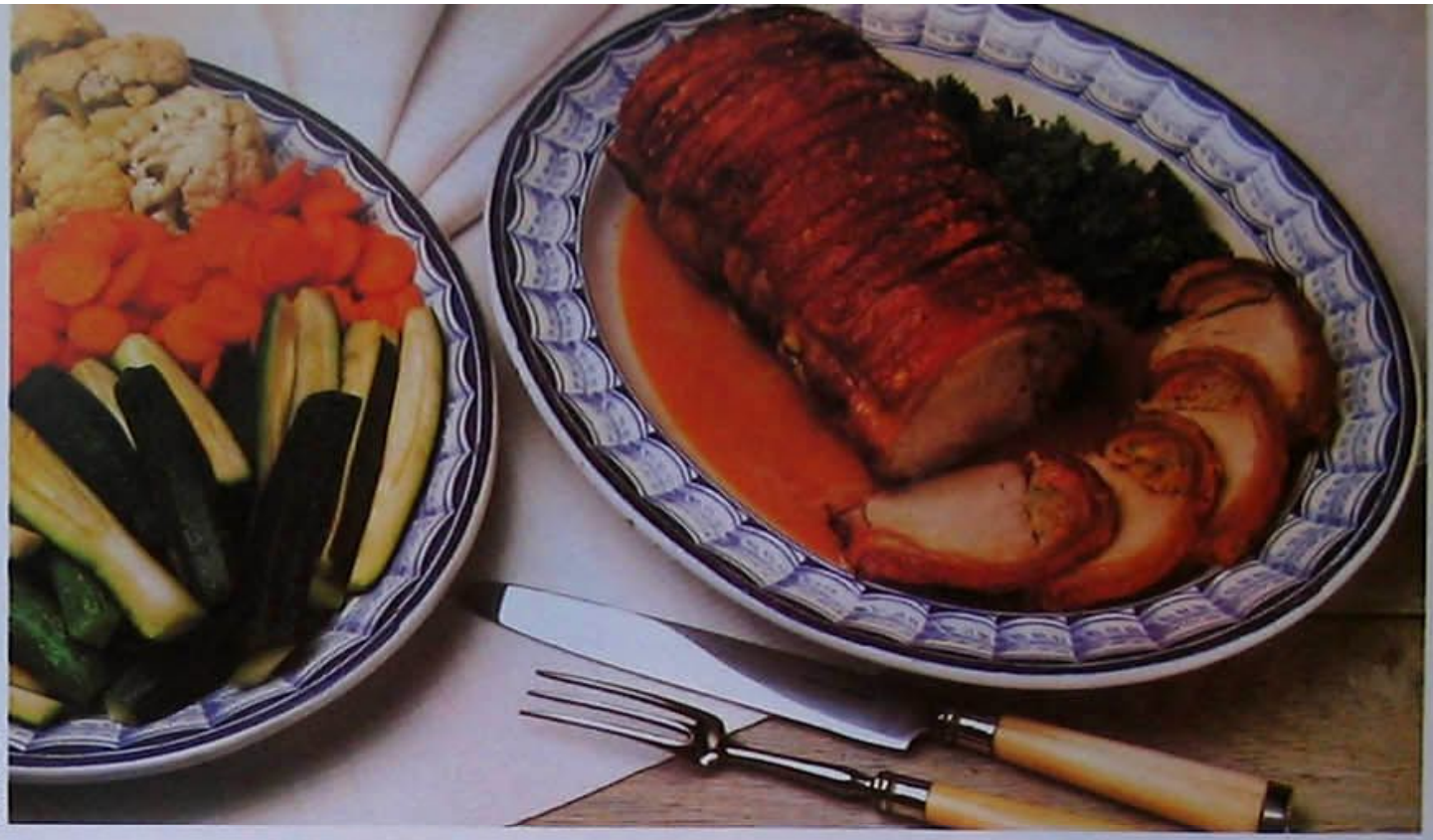
16 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb sausages, well-pricked or skinless
1 small onion, sliced
100g / 4oz plain flour
pinch of salt
2 eggs
275ml / ½pt milk
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs

SERVES 4

1 Grease a 25cm / 10in shallow, round ovenproof dish. Arrange the sausages and onion evenly over the base.
2 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the eggs. Mix, gradually drawing the flour into the eggs, to make a thick paste. Gradually add the milk, beating well to make a smooth batter. Stir in the herbs.
3 Pour the prepared batter over sausages and onion. Place the dish on wire rack on the turntable.
4 Cook at Combination High, temperature setting 250°C for 16-18 minutes until the Yorkshire pudding is risen and golden.



RAY DUNS

Roast Pork with Apple Stuffing

Roast pork with apple stuffing

46 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
1 small onion, chopped
50g / 2oz unsalted cashew nuts, coarsely chopped
1 large cooking apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
1.8kg / 4lb loin of pork, boned
oil to brush
salt to sprinkle
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt unsweetened apple juice or cider
15ml / 1tbls double cream

SERVES 6

1 Put the butter and onion into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once. Add the nuts, apple and celery and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until the apple softens. Mix in the breadcrumbs, parsley, seasoning and lemon juice.

2 Deeply and evenly score the rind of the pork. Place the stuffing mixture along the loin, then roll up and tie at invervals with string. Brush the roll with a little oil and sprinkle with salt.

3 Place, rind side down, on the wire rack with the splash trivet or a dish in position underneath on the turntable.

4 Cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 220°C for 38-42 minutes, turning the loin rind side up after 30 minutes.

5 Place the pork on a warmed serving dish and cover with foil.

6 Skim off any fat from the meat juices collected in the turntable or the dish. Put the cornflour into a bowl and blend in the meat juices. Gradually stir in apple juice or cider. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice until smooth and thickened. Add the cream and salt and pepper, blending well. Serve with the pork.

Baked lemon cheesecake

16 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz digestive or wheatmeal biscuits, crushed
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
100g / 4oz butter, melted

FILLING

225g / 8oz cream cheese
225g / 8oz curd or ricotta cheese
100g / 4oz caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 eggs, separated
45ml / 3tbls cornflour
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla or lemon flavouring
150g / 5oz natural yoghurt

SERVES 8-10

1 Mix the biscuit crumbs, brown sugar, cinnamon and butter together until well blended. Press the mixture into the base of a lightly-greased 27cm / 10½in fluted flan dish.

2 Beat the cheese with the caster sugar, lemon zest, egg yolks, cornflour and flavouring until smooth.

3 Whisk the egg whites until they stand in stiff peaks. Fold the yoghurt into the cheesecake mixture, followed by the egg whites, using a large metal spoon.

4 Spoon the filling over the biscuit crust and level the surface. Place on the wire rack and cook at Combination Medium, temperature setting 250°C for 16-18 minutes. Cool, then serve.

VARIATION

Use a 392g / 14oz can of fruit pie filling as a topping. Blackcurrant would be a good choice with the lemon filling.

Gammon steaks in cider

Gammon is always a useful and economical standby. Add a delicious cream and cider sauce, cook it in the microwave, and you will have a superb main course in minutes.

This tasty combination of gammon with cream, mushrooms and cider will be an absolute winner with family and friends alike. All it needs is boiled potatoes and a fresh green salad to make it a perfect meal.

It's a good idea to snip the fat on the edges off the steaks. Not only does this make them look attractive, but it also stops the meat curling while cooking.

For an attractive decorative effect, spike the rosemary sprigs through the orange slices when garnishing the dish.

Gammon * steaks in cider

10 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

The cooking time of the steaks may vary slightly, depending on the type and thickness of the gammon. Be careful to test for tenderness with a sharp knife.

4 x 100g / 4oz middle cut gammon steaks, rind removed and fat snipped at 2cm / 1in intervals
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
150ml / ¼pt medium sweet cider
1 orange
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
25g / 1oz softened butter or margarine
50g / 2oz mushrooms, chopped
30ml / 2tbls double cream

SERVES 4

How to microwave Gammon steaks

Arrange *the gammon steaks in a large dish, sprinkle with rosemary and then spoon over the cider. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour so that the meat can absorb the herby cider flavour.*

Halve *the orange. Squeeze juice from one half; slice the other. Spoon juice over steaks and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until tender. Rotate dish halfway through.*

Blend *cornflour with butter; stir in mushrooms. Place steaks on a serving plate, cover; stand 4 minutes. Make cooking liquid up to 225ml / 8fl oz with water; add mushroom mixture.*

Microwave, *covered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until bubbling and thick, stirring mixture every minute. Leave the sauce to cool slightly, then stir in the double cream.*

Pour *the sauce over or around the steaks. Microwave at 100% (High) for about 2 minutes to heat through. Garnish with the orange slices and sprigs of rosemary.*

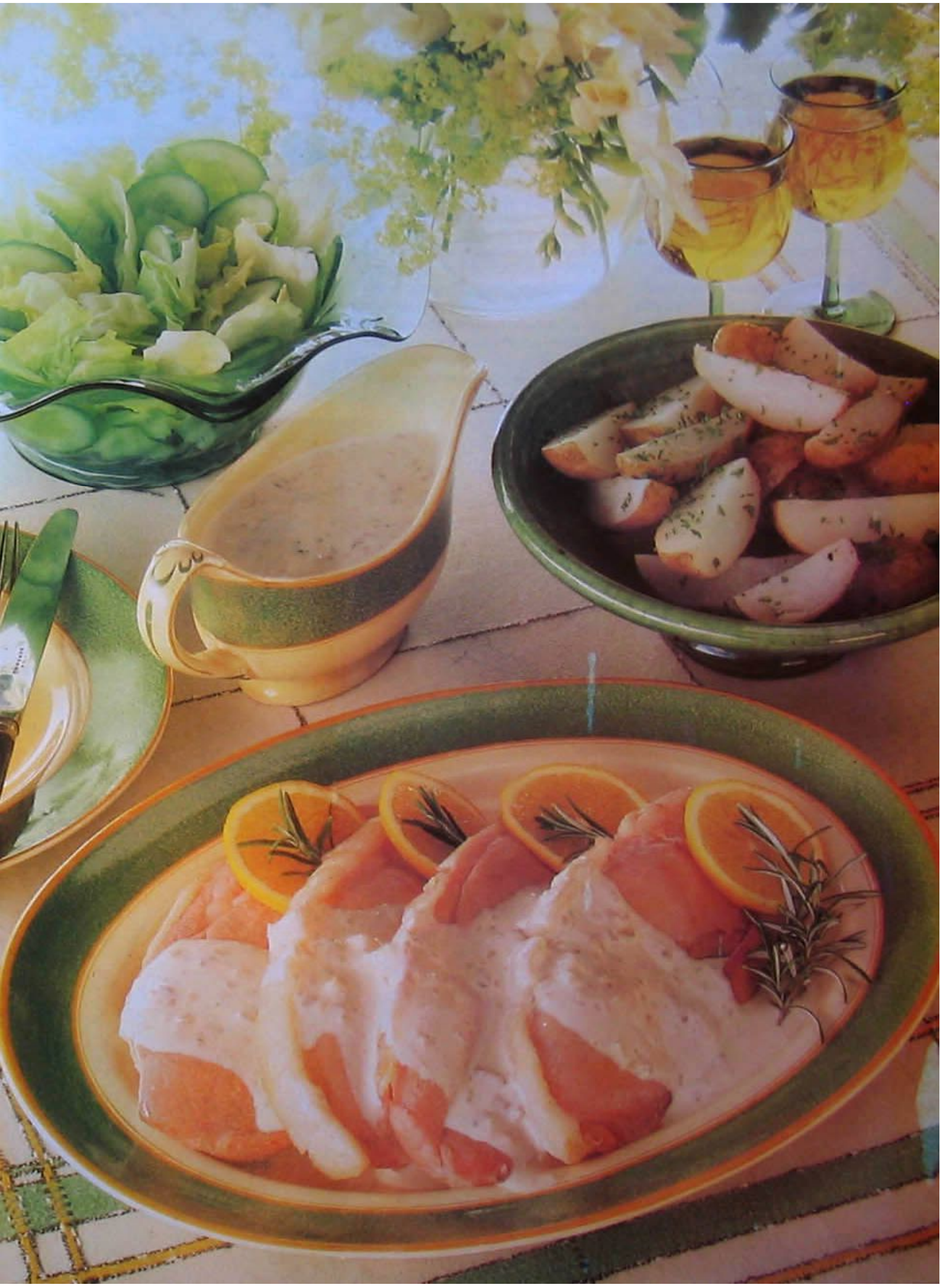
Microtips

Use the microwave to dry rosemary sprigs. Cut into 10cm / 4in sprigs; arrange 10-12 sprigs on absorbent paper in the cooker. Place a glass of water beside them. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until crisp and dry. Rearrange the sprigs every minute.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Substitute ham steaks for gammon steaks. Microwave at 100% (High) until heated through, turning once.

RAY FRUSS

ALAN DUNS



Sophisticated sweets

Elegant sweets with sophisticated flavours make a welcome and delicious gift — or a tempting end to a meal. This selection will satisfy the needs of even the sweetest tooth.

Gentle microwave heating is ideal for sweet-making — and this is not confined to plain toffees or fudges. There's a wide variety of sweets that look as good as any you might find in a confectioner's shop, yet are so simple to make and perfect for an indulgent last mouthful to round off a memorable meal.

Most recipes use storecupboard ingredients which are easily available, so you can make mouth-watering sweetmeats at short notice. In addition, there are some undeniably luxurious confections to tempt even the most committed calorie counter!

Pretty packaging turns a selection of sweets into a professional-looking present. To add a finishing touch, use small paper cases, pretty boxes and tissue paper.

Clockwise from left: *After-dinner Mints; Jamaican Nut Truffles; Lemon and Apricot Balls*

After-dinner mints

8 mins

Standing time: none

400g / 14oz plain chocolate
25g / 1oz lard or shortening
150ml / ¼pt double cream
15ml / 1tbls peppermint flavouring

MAKES 64

1 Break the chocolate into pieces in a bowl with the shortening. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7 minutes to melt, stirring twice.
2 Pour the cream into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until boiling.
3 Mix the chocolate with the cream and peppermint, beating to blend. Cool for 5 minutes.
4 Line a 20cm / 8in square shallow tin with greaseproof paper.
5 Beat the mixture again for 2-3 minutes until smooth and glossy, then pour into the tin. Leave to harden and set.
6 To serve, cut the chocolate mixture into 1 × 5cm / ½ × 2in strips or diamonds using a sharp knife. If liked, serve in paper sweet cases. Keep chilled until ready to serve. Store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

Jamaican nut truffles

9 mins

Standing time: none

200ml / 7fl oz double cream
few drops of liqueur or vanilla flavouring
400g / 14oz plain chocolate
40g / 1½oz butter, softened
½ Jamaica ginger cake (approximately 225g / 8oz)
50g / 2oz pistachio nuts, skinned and finely chopped
cocoa powder or drinking chocolate to coat
whole pistachio kernels to decorate (optional)

MAKES ABOUT 50

1 Pour the cream into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until hot, but not boiling. Stir in the liqueur or vanilla flavouring and mix well.
2 Break the chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7 minutes, stirring twice, until melted. Add to cream mixture and beat well. Chill until almost setting, then beat in the butter until light and fluffy.
3 Rub the ginger cake through a coarse sieve and beat the crumbs into the cooled truffle mixture with the pistachio nuts. Allow to set in the refrigerator, then divide into small walnut-sized balls.
4 Dust in a little cocoa powder or drinking chocolate and place in paper cases. Store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

Monk's temptation

4 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz plain chocolate
100g / 4oz white chocolate
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp orange curaçao or Benedictine
75ml / 5tbls icing sugar, sifted
45ml / 3tbls hazelnuts, finely ground
30ml / 2tbls double cream
18 toasted skinned hazelnuts, chocolate dragees or gold cake balls

MAKES 18

1 Break the plain chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, stirring twice until melted. Use this to coat the insides of 18 paper sweet cases, then invert the cases on to greaseproof paper so that the chocolate edges remain thicker than the base. Chill until set.
2 When completely set, peel the paper cases off carefully. Return chocolate cups to chill.
3 Break the white chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl with the butter. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, stirring once, until the chocolate is soft and melted.
4 Add the liqueur, icing sugar, ground nuts and cream and beat well until smooth and thick. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle and pipe rosettes of the mixture into the chocolate cups.
5 Top each swirl with a toasted hazelnut kernel, dragee or cake ball. Place in paper sweet cases. Chill and serve within 3-4 days.

Cook's notes

To line sweet cases with melted chocolate, use a pastry brush to make an even coating on the base and sides, making sure the case does not open out and lose its shape. Invert the cases on to greaseproof paper and chill until set.

Lemon and apricot balls

5 mins

Standing time: none

250g / 9oz dried apricots
45ml / 3tbls water
75g / 3oz desiccated coconut
67.5ml / 4½tbls chopped nuts
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
grated zest of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls granulated sugar
angelica sticks to decorate

MAKES 32

1 Place apricots in a bowl with water and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes until tender.
2 Turn into a food processor with coconut, nuts, lemon zest and juice; process until pulpy.
3 Form into a solid mass and divide it into 32 even balls. Roll in sugar and decorate with pieces of angelica.

Left to right: *Marzipan Toffee Balls; Monk's Temptation; Strawberry Nut Fondants; Chocolate Cherry Liqueurs*

Cook's notes

It is possible to make these sweets without using a food processor.

The cooked apricots can be finely minced with the nuts and other ingredients. This may need to be done several times to get the required consistency for rolling into balls.

Any type of nuts — almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts or a mixture of these — can be used.

For variety, coat some of the balls in desiccated coconut.

Strawberry nut fondants

1½ mins

Standing time: none

227g / 8oz packet white fondant icing
14 strawberries, with hulls
45ml / 3tbls mixed nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts) chopped

MAKES 14

1 Cut the fondant icing into pieces and place in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-1¾ minutes, stirring twice, until the fondant is smoothly melted.
2 Hold each strawberry in turn by the stalk and dip the pointed end into the melted fondant to three-quarters coat the fruit.
3 Quickly dip the pointed ends in the nuts to coat. Leave on greaseproof paper to harden (see Cook's notes, below).
4 You should be able to coat four to five strawberries at a time, then you will need to warm the fondant again to produce a coating consistency. Microwave at 100% (High) for about 5 seconds until fully melted whenever necessary.
5 Serve the same day, in paper sweet cases.

Cook's notes

For perfectly shaped fondant strawberries, allow them to dry on cocktail sticks stuck into a solid base.

Chocolate cherry liqueurs

5 mins

Standing time: none

36 fresh cherries
50-75g / 2-3oz almond marzipan
45-60ml / 3-4tbls kirsch or cherry brandy
200g / 7oz plain chocolate-flavour cake covering

MAKES 36

1 Wash the cherries and remove the stones using a cherry stoner, taking care not to crush cherries.
2 Divide the marzipan into 36 small pieces and roll into balls. Insert a marzipan ball in place of the cherry stones.
3 Place the stuffed cherries in a bowl with the kirsch or cherry brandy. Cover and leave to soak for 12 hours at room temperature.
4 Break the chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl.
5 Microwave the chocolate at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes, stirring once, until melted.
6 Pat the cherries dry on absorbent paper, then dip them in the melted chocolate to coat them all over. This is best done by piercing them through the stalk end with a fine skewer or cocktail stick. Tap the skewer lightly against the side of the bowl to shake off any excess chocolate.
7 Leave the cherries on a piece of greaseproof paper in the refrigerator to set. (Or leave with sticks embedded in a solid base for a better shape when set).
8 Serve the same day in small paper sweet cases.

Cook's notes

If you want the cherries to keep for longer, use glacé cherries. As these are already preserved in sugar, they will last for 3-4 days.

If using glacé cherries, there is no need to fill the centres with marzipan, as they will hold their shape without any additional filling inside.

Marzipan toffee balls

12 mins

Standing time: none

125g / 4½oz white marzipan, or almond flavoured soft icing
100g / 4oz sugar
150ml / ¼pt cold water
10 blanched almonds

MAKES 10

1 Divide the marzipan into 10 pieces and shape into balls.
2 Place the sugar and water in a 1.1L / 2pt heatproof bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring twice to ensure that the sugar has melted. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, without stirring, until golden.
3 Dip the marzipan balls in the toffee mixture using a fork or skewer, then leave on greaseproof paper to set. Top each one with a blanched almond while still sticky. Leave for 5 minutes, then place in paper sweet cases. Keep in a cool place for 1-2 weeks.

Teenage party

Teenagers will relish the well flavoured food in these colourful party dishes. You have a recipe for success with easy-to-prepare food which makes a good spread for a buffet or a sit-down meal.

By teen-age, the need for sweet tea-time foods — jellies and cup cakes has faded, and a substantial menu of savoury and sweet dishes with good flavours will be much more enthusiastically received. The choice of dishes here could be served either as a sit-down meal or a buffet, and the quantities can easily be increased to cater for larger numbers.

Older teenagers will find the dishes easy to serve up once they have been prepared in advance, and for parents supervizing younger teenagers, the time which a microwave saves on cooking and heating will be a boon during the party.

The menu will lend itself well to all manner of celebrations — an end of exam party; passing a driving test; a birthday. For the latter just add a cake — and why not use sparklers instead of candles for a special effect?

Pitta bread is much tastier if served hot; cut each piece in half and place eight halves at a time on the floor of the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, turning once. Repeat with the remaining pitta bread.

The fondue can be microwaved from scratch in just ten minutes. Have ready a large dish of prepared fresh fruit (well sprinkled with lemon juice to prevent discoloration) so there is only a short wait between courses.

Baby sweetcorn with bacon

6 mins

Standing time: none

Use cooked prawns in place of the baby sweetcorn and serve hot on toast to make the classic savoury, Devils on horseback, served before or after the main course.

2 × 425g / 15oz cans baby sweetcorn cobs
8-10 streaky bacon rashers
50g / 2oz Red Leicester cheese, finely grated
chopped parsley, to garnish

SERVES 8

1 Drain the corn cobs thoroughly.
2 Remove the rind from the bacon rashers. Stretch the bacon using the back of a knife and cut each rasher in half crossways.
3 Wrap a piece of bacon round each corn cob, folding the loose edge underneath.
4 Arrange on a microwave roasting rack and cover with a layer of absorbent paper.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until the bacon is cooked.
6 Sprinkle with grated cheese and garnish with parsley.

ALAN DUNS

Countdown

During the afternoon
Prepare the kebabs and leave to chill, covered, in the refrigerator. Microwave the Baby Sweetcorn, and leave covered until needed for reheating. Grate the cheese and chop the parsley.

Prepare the Tomato Salad and keep. Shred the lettuce and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Measure the ingredients for the fondue into a large bowl.

Two hours before the party
Prepare the fruit for the fondue and sprinkle with lemon juice. Cover with cling film and store in the refrigerator.

Thirty minutes before serving
Put snacks such as crisps and nuts out in small bowls. Cook the rice and leave to stand. Reheat the corn cobs with bacon and sprinkle with cheese and parsley. Serve while the kebabs are cooking. Microwave the pitta bread and serve with the Tomato Salad, rice and kebabs. If necessary, reheat the rice at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. (If preferred, cook the rice in the afternoon then reheat from cold for 5-6 minutes.

Before the pudding
Microwave the fondue until hot. Serve with the prepared fruit.

Party kebabs

28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb minced beef
700g / 1½lb minced lamb
1 large onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
juice of 1 lemon
15ml / 1tbls garam masala
salt and pepper
32 bay leaves (optional)
soy sauce for brushing
2 crisp lettuces, shredded
lemon wedges to garnish

SERVES 8

1 Mix the beef, lamb, onion, tomato purée, lemon juice, garam masala, salt and pepper in a bowl.
2 Divide into 40 portions. Form each piece into a ball or short sausage and thread on to eight wooden skewers, alternating five pieces of meat mixture with two bay leaves on each one.
3 Refrigerate for 4 hours.
4 Arrange half the skewers on a roasting rack; brush with soy sauce. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 14-16 minutes. Repeat with remaining kebabs.
5 Stand for 5 minutes. Serve on lettuce, with lemon wedges.
6 To heat pitta bread, see introduction, page 545.

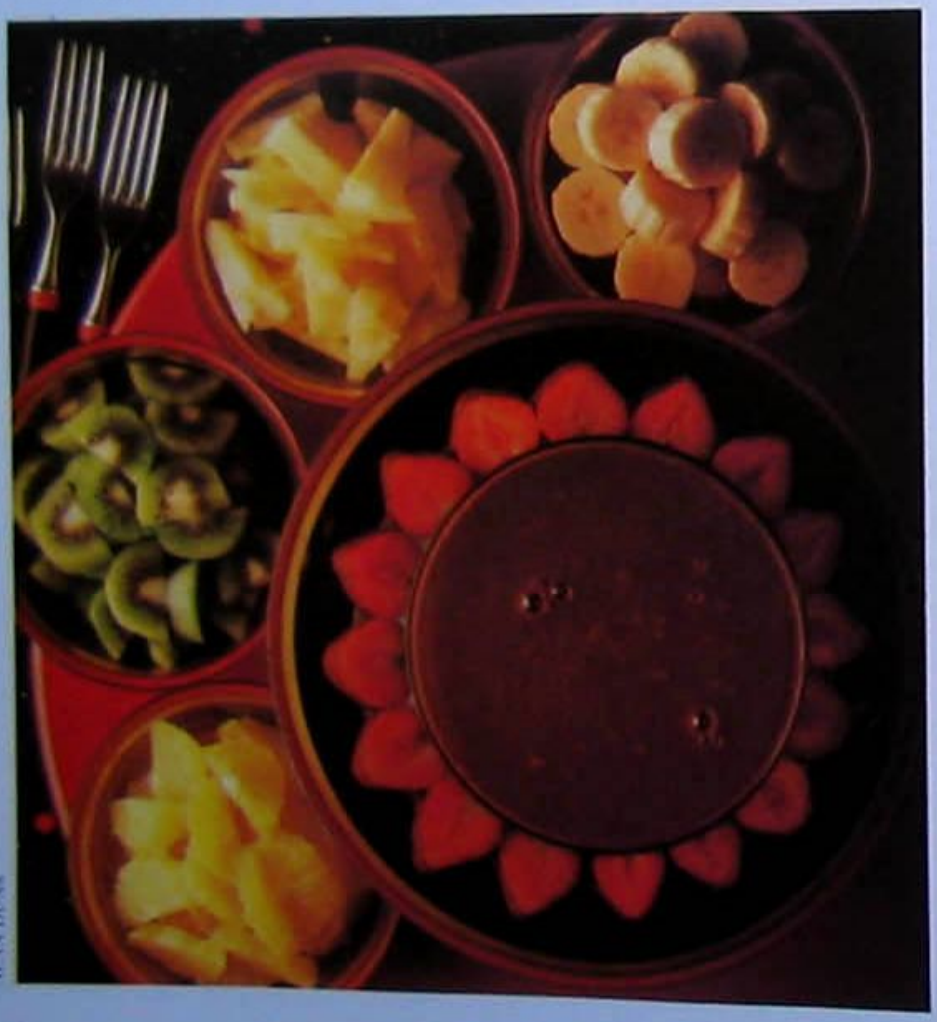
Tomato salad

900g / 2lb tomatoes, sliced
1 Spanish onion, finely sliced
100ml / 3½fl oz salad oil
75ml / 3fl oz wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp French mustard
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 8

1 Layer tomato and onion in a bowl.
2 Mix all the remaining ingredients except the parsley in a screw-topped jar. Shake well.
3 Pour the dressing over salad, garnish with parsley.

Chocolate Fondue



Savoury rice

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 large onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb long-grain rice
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée
large pinch of cayenne pepper
salt
1.1L / 2pt hot water
1 beef stock cube
275g / 10oz packet stir-fry frozen vegetables

SERVES 8

1 Place onion and oil in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
2 Stir in the rice, tomato purée, cayenne and salt. Add the hot water and stock cube. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 18-20 minutes. Stir in the vegetables after 10 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Chocolate fondue

10 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz plain cooking chocolate
275ml / ½pt single cream
150ml / ¼pt unsweetened fruit juice

FRUIT DIPPERS
1 medium pineapple, chopped
3 kiwi fruit, sliced
4 pears, cut into eighths lengthways
2 large bananas, cut into chunks
2 oranges, divided into segments
225g / 8oz strawberries, hulled
lemon juice to sprinkle

SERVES 8

1 Arrange the fruit in dishes and sprinkle with lemon juice.
2 Place the chocolate, cream and fruit juice in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, or until the mixture blends together.
4 Serve immediately with cocktail sticks to spear and dip the fruit.

Microwaving liver

Liver is always a good choice when you are stuck for a quick, but nourishing meal. Lambs' liver makes an inexpensive, tasty midweek supper while calves' liver is ideal for a special dinner.

Liver cooks beautifully in the microwave for several reasons — it cooks fast but retains its moist texture, it needs no tenderizing and, being prepared in thin slices, it is evenly penetrated by the microwaves.

Calves' liver is the most expensive, and its delicate taste and smooth texture make it the perfect choice for special-occasion meals. Lambs' liver is less pricy but is still very pleasant-tasting and ideal for family eating. The two are easily interchangeable in most recipes. Just deduct 1-2 minutes cooking time if substituting calves' liver and add 1-2 minutes for lambs'.

Pigs' liver, cheaper still, has a strong flavour, but some of this can be removed by soaking the liver in a little milk for a few hours before cooking.

Cooking times are crucial, since — just as with conventional cooking — overcooking produces a dry, grainy and coarse result. 'Pinkness' on the other hand, is perfectly safe and quality livers like calves' and chicken are often enjoyed slightly rare.

Liver also freezes beautifully. Always defrost before cooking. Leave in freezer bag (without metal tie), supermarket tray or tub and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-7 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Stand for 5 minutes, then drain and dry thoroughly before cooking.

Chicken Livers and Pasta

Liver, bacon and onions

7 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

By cooking liver in hot fat, such as the bacon juices, it's possible to get an appetizing appearance, without using a browning dish.

175g / 6oz streaky bacon, each rasher cut across into three
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, sliced
30ml / 2tbls plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
1 onion, thinly sliced

SERVES 4

2 Toss *liver in seasoned flour and arrange in single layer in the dish. Top with onion rings, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.*

Microwaving step-by-step

1 Place *bacon in casserole. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Drain, leaving 30ml / 2tbls fat in dish.*

3 Turn *liver over; add bacon, cover. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, turning once during cooking. Allow to stand for 2 minutes.*

Lambs' liver in a browning dish

5 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Preheat dish for 5 minutes or follow manufacturer's instructions. Dry liver well with absorbent paper or it will steam, not fry.

15ml / 1tbls cooking oil
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, sliced
½ small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
pepper

SERVES 4

2 Add *liver and press down with spatula to get an even contact. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute and turn over.*

Microwaving step-by-step

1 **Preheat** *browning dish. Add oil and butter or margarine. Do not remove from the cooker.*

3 **Add** *onions and microwave, uncovered, for 4-5 minutes until tender, stirring once. Stir in soy sauce and pepper and stand for 2 minutes.*

Chicken livers and pasta

8 mins

Standing time: none

225-275g / 8-10oz fresh tagliatelle
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1.7L / 3pt boiling water
15g / ½oz butter
½ onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 green pepper, chopped
225g / 8oz chicken livers, each liver cut in two
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
15ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
3 tomatoes, cut into wedges
salt and pepper
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place tagliatelle and oil in a large bowl and add boiling water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until tender; drain and set aside.
2 Place butter in a shallow casserole with onion, garlic, green pepper and chicken livers. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, stirring once.
3 Stir chicken liver mixture into pasta with the mushrooms, parsley, tomatoes and seasoning.
4 Cover and microwave for 1-2 minutes, and serve sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.

Oriental liver

7½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

6 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, chopped
45ml / 3tbls light brown sugar
75ml / 3fl oz wine vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp Five spice powder
15ml / 3tsp cornflour blended with 30ml / 2tbls water
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, cut into thin strips
1 bunch spring onions, trimmed and cut diagonally into slices
1 small red pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips

SERVES 4

Liver, Bacon and Onions

1 Place bacon in a shallow dish and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Drain off excess fat.
2 Stir in sugar, vinegar, Five spice powder, cornflour mixture and seasoning.
3 Add liver, turning in sauce to coat evenly. Add spring onions and red pepper.
4 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice. Stand for 2 minutes.

Calves' liver with vermouth

5½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

4 slices calves' liver, about 100g / 4oz each
juice of 1 orange and grated zest of ½ orange
150ml / 5fl oz double cream
50ml / 2fl oz sweet vermouth
1.5ml / ¼tsp French mustard
10ml / 2tsp cornflour blended with 15ml / 1tbls water
salt and pepper
1 clove garlic, halved
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
strips of orange zest and parsley sprigs to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Mix together orange juice and zest, cream, vermouth, mustard, cornflour mixture and seasoning. Set aside.
2 Clean and thoroughly dry liver slices and rub with the cut surface of the garlic.
3 Heat browning dish in microwave for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions.
4 Add oil and then lay liver slices in dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.
5 Turn liver over, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes or until tender. Transfer liver to serving plate, cover and leave the dish to stand for 2 minutes.
6 Whisk cream mixture into juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until the cream is thickened.
7 Spoon around liver and serve, garnished with strips of orange zest and sprigs of parsley.

Gingered liver parcels

6 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Lambs' liver would work equally well in this recipe, but the delicate flavour of calves' liver makes this a particularly elegant dish, especially if wine rather than stock is used.

2 slices calves' liver, about 100g / 4oz each
2 long slices streaky bacon
½ small onion, quartered

MARINADE
1.5ml / ¼tsp English mustard
10ml / 2tsp light brown sugar
1cm / ½in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and crushed
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls dry white wine or stock

SERVES 2

How to microwave Gingered liver parcels

Mix *mustard, sugar, ginger, seasoning and wine or stock. Place liver in dish, cover with marinade and marinate in refrigerator for 2 hours.*

Place *bacon in casserole, cover with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, until almost cooked, but not crisp. Remove.*

Secure *onion quarters with wooden cocktail stick. Add to bacon fat in casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.*

Place *onion quarter in centre of each liver slice and wrap up. Roll bacon around liver and secure with cocktail stick. Place on roasting rack.*

Baste *with marinade. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, basting once. Stand for 2 minutes.*

Cook's notes

Whenever securing meat parcels, meat rolls or kebabs always use wooden cocktail sticks, never metal skewers. Plastic cocktail sticks would not damage the microwave but could melt inside hot food. Long wooden saté sticks are available from cookshops and Chinese supermarkets if you find that normal wooden cocktail sticks are too short for your meat parcels.

Liver with green pepper

8 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

450g / 1lb lambs' liver, cut into thin slices
1 small onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
45ml / 3tbls tomato juice
10ml / 2tsp clear honey
1 clove garlic, crushed
salt and pepper
2 tomatoes, cut into wedges

SERVES 4

1 Arrange liver in a single layer in a shallow dish. Top with onion and green pepper.
2 Mix together tomato juice, honey, garlic and seasoning and pour over liver.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
4 Arrange tomatoes on top and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-7 minutes until liver is tender, turning once. Stand for 2 minutes.

Braised liver and vegetables

16½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 chipolata sausages
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb pigs' liver, thinly sliced and coated in seasoned flour
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
1 carrot, thinly sliced
150ml / 5fl oz beef stock
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp mixed dried herbs

SERVES 4

1 Place sausages and oil in a large shallow casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Remove sausages. Drain off all but 15ml / 1tbls of fat.
2 Place liver, onion, celery and carrot in casserole and stir.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stir once. Add sausages and remaining ingredients.
4 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, stirring twice. Stand for 5 minutes.

Liver with Green Pepper

Liver in wine sauce

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, cut into thin slices
45ml / 3tbls plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
½ onion, finely chopped
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
75ml / 3fl oz dry white wine
1 clove garlic, crushed
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
¼ chicken stock cube, dissolved in 50ml / 2fl oz boiling water
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave butter or margarine in covered shallow casserole at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted.
2 Toss liver in seasoned flour and add to casserole in a single layer. Top with onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, turning liver once.
3 Add mushrooms, wine, garlic, parsley, hot stock and seasoning.
4 Cover with cling film, rolled back at one edge. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 3-4 minutes, until liver is tender, stirring once during cooking.

Soft berry fruits

Poaching berries in the microwave leaves them whole, tender and still bursting with flavour. Puréeing them to make sauces, soufflés and whips is quick and easy too.

Soft berry fruits should be used to the full while in season. The fruits covered here include raspberries, blackberries and gooseberries. Loganberries, which are a larger relative of the raspberry, and mulberries, which are like very large, sweet, juicy blackberries, can be substituted in the recipes where appropriate. All can be eaten raw, with the exception of cooking gooseberries, which need light poaching to soften skins and release natural juices. However, light poaching of any berries brings out all their flavour.

Poaching in a microwave gives

perfect results because the berries are spread out in a wide dish so they soften evenly and remain whole. Cooking time and the amount of added sweetening depends on the variety and ripeness of the fruit.

Poach the fruit in sugar and water with a flavouring, or in a syrup. Adding fruit to a prepared syrup makes a delicious dessert, which can be served on its own or with cream, yoghurt or custard.

If puréeing berries, use only a little liquid, otherwise the purée will be thin and watery. Sweeten with sugar, honey, or a preserve such as redcurrant jelly.

Generally, soft fruit should not be washed, but just checked over carefully for dirt or twigs. Top and tail gooseberries with kitchen scissors or a knife. All soft fruit should be used within a day of picking, but can be covered with cling film and refrigerated for a couple of days. When buying, check the bottom of the punnet and avoid any stained with juices as the berries are past their best.

Raspberry and Blackcurrant Pie

Raspberry and blackcurrant pie

11¾ mins

Standing time: none

Complement the tangy flavour of this dessert with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
450g / 1lb blackcurrants
225g / 8oz raspberries
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 6

1 Place the blackcurrants and raspberries in a medium bowl. Stir in the flour, sugar and cinnamon. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring three times until the mixture is thickened and just boiling.
2 Spread the mixture in the pastry case and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, turning the dish once during the cooking time.
3 Serve immediately or place cling film on the surface to prevent a skin forming and leave to cool. When cold, decorate with whipped cream, if liked.

VARIATIONS
Any combination of soft fruits can be used for this recipe, provided one of the fruits is slightly tart. For example, try substituting blueberries for blackcurrants and loganberries for the raspberries.

Gooseberry soufflé

8¼ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb gooseberries
pared zest and 30ml / 2tbls juice of 1 small orange
75g / 3oz caster sugar
45ml / 3tbls water
15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
150ml / ¼pt double or whipping cream
2 large egg whites
65ml / 2½fl oz double or whipping cream to decorate

SERVES 4-6

1 Prepare four 150ml / ¼pt or six smaller, individual soufflé dishes, or a 575ml / 1pt soufflé dish. Tie a double band of greaseproof paper around the dishes to stand 5cm / 2in above the rim.
2 Prepare and arrange the gooseberries in a shallow dish as directed in Step 1, page 554. Tuck strips of orange zest between the gooseberries. Add the orange juice and sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes until the gooseberries are soft, stirring once or twice. Remove the orange zest, and sieve the fruit. Leave to cool.
3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a bowl and leave to soak for 5 minutes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds until the gelatine is dissolved. Stir into the cold gooseberry purée.
4 Whip the cream until just thick. Whisk the egg whites until holding soft peaks. Stir the cream into the purée, then fold in the whisked egg whites. Pour into the prepared dishes and chill for 1-2 hours.
5 To serve, untie the greaseproof paper and ease away. Pipe on an extra 65ml / 2½fl oz whipped cream, if wished.

Freezer notes

Substitute frozen gooseberries for fresh. Place in bowl with zest, but no liquid. Microwave for 13-15 minutes until berries are soft, stirring several times.

How to microwave berries

Pick *over the fruit to remove any dirt or twigs, discarding any damaged berries. Top and tail the gooseberries and hull the other berries, if necessary. Spread out evenly in a 20cm / 8in shallow dish.*

Sprinkle *with 75g / 3oz sugar and add 30ml / 2tbls water, together with one of the following: cloves, cinnamon, sprig of fresh mint or strip of citrus peel. Cover with vented cling film or a loose-fitting lid.*

Microwave *blackberries and gooseberries at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once; cook raspberries for 1-2 minutes. Let stand 3-5 minutes. For purées, cook for 8-9 minutes; cook raspberries 2-3 minutes.*

How to microwave berries in a syrup

Put *100g / 4oz sugar, 125ml / 4fl oz water and flavouring into a 20cm / 8in dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Microwave another minute or until the syrup boals.*

Prepare *450g / 1lb gooseberries or blackberries and stir into the hot syrup. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, rotating three times and stirring once. Let stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes to soften the berries.*

Softer fruits *that need little cooking and require extra juice, such as raspberries and loganberries, can be stirred into the hot syrup and left to stand and soften until cold. This ensures the berries stay whole.*

RAY DUNN

Blackberry and apple crumble

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

FILLING
350g / 12oz cooking apples
225g / 8oz blackberries
45ml / 3tbls sugar

CRUMBLE
175g / 6oz plain flour
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz sugar
45ml / 3tbls mixed chopped nuts
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar

SERVES 4-5

1 Butter a 1.7L / 3pt dish. Peel, core and slice the apples. Put into the dish with the blackberries and sprinkle with the sugar.
2 To make the crumble, place the flour in a bowl, rub in the butter or margarine and stir in the sugar. Spread the crumble mixture evenly over the fruits, sprinkle with nuts and demerara sugar.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, rotating the dish 3-4 times. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Serve hot or cold with cream or custard.

VARIATIONS
The crumble can be varied by using part wholewheat flour or substituting oats for some of the flour. Add spices, grated orange or lemon rind to the topping for extra flavour.

Blackberry velvet

14 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb blackberries
30ml / 2tbls water
22.5ml / 4½tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp mixed spice
45ml / 3tbls golden syrup
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar

SERVES 5-6

1 Prepare and arrange the blackberries in a dish (see Step 1, opposite). Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes until very soft, stirring 1-2 times. Cool, then sieve.
2 In a large bowl, mix the cornflour and spice. Whisk in some of the purée and blend until smooth; add the syrup and sugar.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, whisking every minute until the mixture is thickened and boiling. Pour into glass dishes and chill. Decorate each serving with a spoonful of cream and a blackberry and serve with biscuits, if liked.

Gooseberry sauce

8½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb gooseberries
75g / 3oz caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls water
25g / 1oz butter

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Top and tail the gooseberries and spread them in a wide, shallow dish (see Step 1, opposite). Sprinkle with sugar and add the water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes until the fruit is very soft, stirring twice. Add the butter and allow to melt, then sieve the gooseberries.
3 To serve hot, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Chill if serving cold.

Cook's notes

Serve the sauce hot or cold with puddings, pancakes or ice cream and flavour with a little grated nutmeg or cinnamon when adding the butter. Alternatively, serve as a savoury sauce with mackerel, herrings or trout; in which case, flavour the gooseberries with fennel or dill and add only 30ml / 2tbls caster sugar to give a sharper taste.

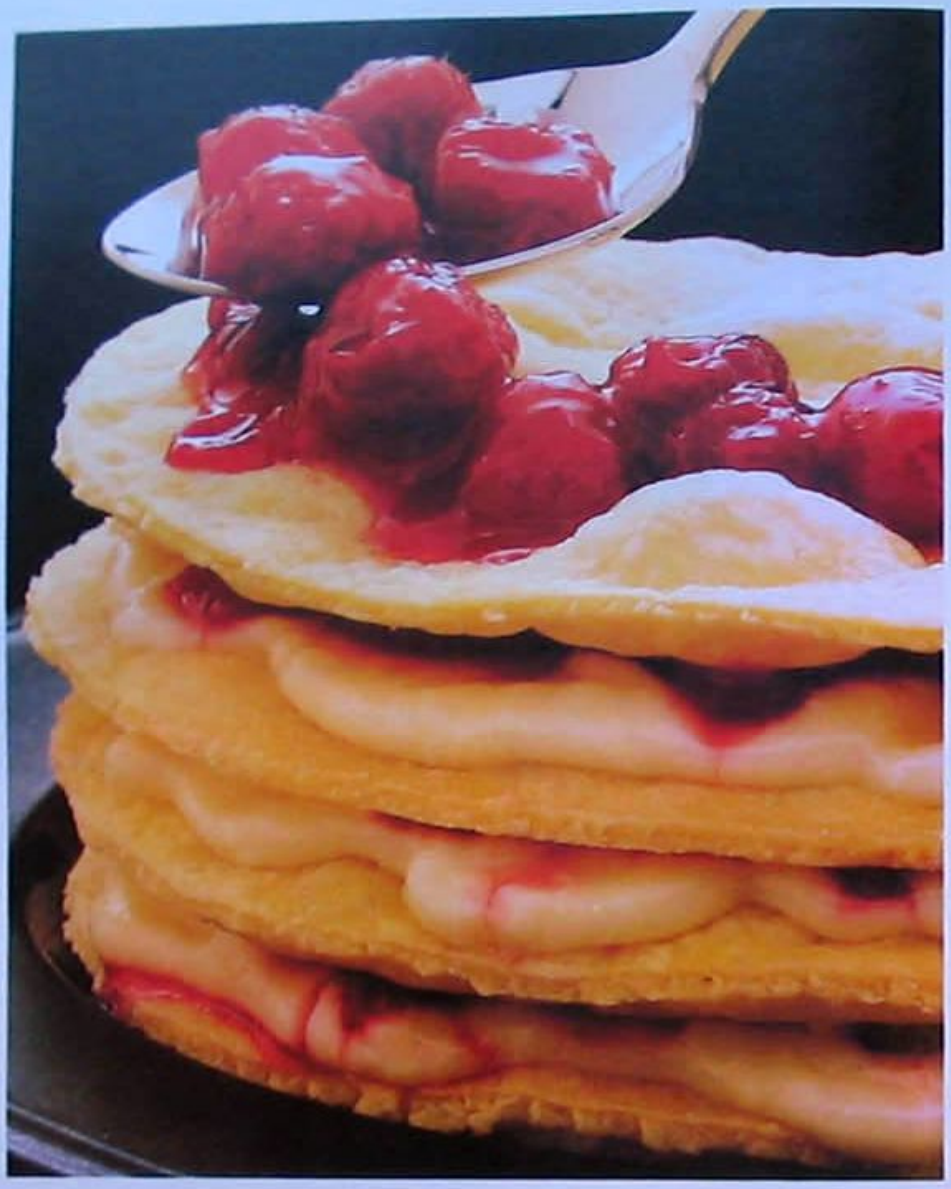
Below: *Blackberry Velvet and Gooseberry Sauce*

RAY DUNS

Raspberry cream torte

21 mins

Standing time: none



CUSTARD FILLING
37.5ml / 7½tsps cornflour
50g / 2oz caster sugar
350ml / 12fl oz milk
3 egg yolks
15g / ½oz butter
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

PASTRY
350g / 12oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
150g / 5oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz lard or white cooking margarine
100-125ml / 3½-4fl oz single cream or evaporated milk
few drops of yellow colouring

RASPBERRY FILLING
50g / 2oz caster sugar
125ml / 4fl oz water
22.5ml / 4½tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
225g / 8oz raspberries

SERVES 6-8

1 To make the custard, mix the cornflour and sugar in a bowl. Stir in 30ml / 2tbls milk and the egg yolks to make a smooth mixture.

2 Microwave the remaining milk, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until hot. Gradually whisk the hot milk into the blended mixture.

3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking three times until the custard is thickened. Stir in the butter and flavouring. Lay cling film on the surface to prevent a skin forming, and chill until firm.

4 To make the pastry, sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Use a knife to cut the butter or margarine and lard or white fat into the flour, then rub in until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Combine some of the cream or milk with the colouring. Sprinkle it over the mixture and mix to a dough with a fork, adding as much of the remaining liquid as required.

5 Divide into quarters. Roll out each on a floured surface to a 18cm / 7in circle. Place each on non-stick baking paper and microwave individually at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until the pastry looks dry and set, rotating 2-3 times. Lift carefully on to a wire rack and cool until firm before removing the paper. Leave on one side until cold.

6 To make the raspberry filling, put the sugar and water into a 20cm / 8in shallow dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring every minute to dissolve the sugar evenly. Microwave a further minute until the syrup boils.

7 In a bowl, blend the cornflour with the water and stir into the hot syrup with half the raspberries. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring 2-3 times until thickened and boiling. Stir in the remaining raspberries. Leave until cold.

TO ASSEMBLE THE TORTE

Put one pastry round on a serving dish and spread with one-third of the custard, then a quarter of the raspberry filling. Cover with another pastry round and repeat the layers, finishing with raspberry filling on the top pastry round. Chill in the refrigerator until serving time, preferably no longer than 24 hours.

Cook's notes

The pastry rounds are crisp and crumbly when freshly made, but the assembled layers will soften slightly through contact with the fillings.

Once chilled, however, the torte is firm and easy to cut. Keep the fillings away from the edge of the pastry to prevent spillage.

Special occasion cakes

A cake makes an eye-catching centre-piece for the teatable, and results are excellent when you bake by microwave. Enhance your repertoire with any of these very varied cakes.

All manner of large cakes can be microwaved with great success — from rich fruit mixtures to light, airy sponge cakes. Those with a built-in topping are particularly suited to microwaving, as a coloured or textured surface makes up for the fact that the cakes do not brown in the microwave.

Chocolate, spices or fruit in the mixture also help to give colour to a cooked cake. If there is no other form of colouring, a coating of glacé icing or butter cream will improve its appearance.

Microwaved cakes do not keep well, but they are quick to make, so there is no need to cook or to freeze in advance. Their delicious fresh-cooked texture will probably ensure they are eaten quickly.

Black Forest Gateau

DAVE KING

Black Forest gateau

22½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This traditional gateau makes a good dessert or party centre-piece.

450g / 1lb frozen black cherries, or 425g / 15oz can stoned black cherries, drained, reserving 75ml / 3fl oz juice
175g / 6oz butter or margarine, softened
175g / 6oz caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
150g / 5oz self-raising flour
30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls hot water

FILLING
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls kirsch
30ml / 6tsp cornflour

CREAM TOPPING
425ml / ¾pt double cream
45ml / 3tbls kirsch

DECORATION
75g / 3oz plain chocolate
fresh cherries

SERVES 8

How to microwave Black Forest gateau

Place *the frozen cherries in a glass bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-10 minutes, stirring twice until the cherries are thawed. Drain well, reserving the juice. Make this up to 75ml / 3fl oz with water if necessary. Cut the cherries into quarters.*

Line *a 23cm / 9in dish with greased greaseproof paper. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, mixing well. Sift the flour, cocoa and salt together, then fold into the mixture with the hot water. Fold half the cherries into the mixture.*

Turn *into the cake dish. Place on an inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 5-6 minutes, giving the dish a ¼ turn every 2 minutes. Test with a cocktail stick inserted into the centre — it should come out clean.*

Allow *to stand for 5 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack. Remove the lining paper. Combine all the filling ingredients and the reserved juice in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until thick. Add remaining cherries and cool. Halve the cake horizontally.*

Whisk *the cream in a bowl until it stands in soft peaks. Beat in the kirsch, a little at a time until the cream mixture becomes thick again. Spread half the cream over the bottom layer of the cake. Spread the cherry filling over the cream and place the other layer of the cake on top.*

Place *the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½ minutes, stirring once. Spread thinly on a cold surface; allow to set. Using a long knife, shave off long chocolate curls. Pipe the remaining cream on the cake. Decorate with chocolate curls and cherries.*

Crumble cake

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

150g / 5oz plain flour
100g / 4oz caster sugar
50g / 2oz soft margarine
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
2 eggs, beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk

TOPPING
75g / 3oz plain flour
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 8-10

1 Place all the cake ingredients except 60ml / 4tbls of the milk in a bowl and beat together with an electric mixer at low speed for 1-2 minutes until blended.
2 Add the remaining milk and mix in with a wooden spoon.
3 Line the base of a 23cm / 9in round cake dish with a circle of greased greaseproof paper.
4 Spread the mixture evenly in the dish.
5 To make the topping, rub all the ingredients together until crumbly, using the fingertips. Sprinkle over the cake mixture.
6 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes.
7 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 3-5 minutes until springy to the touch.
8 Remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 5 minutes to complete the cooking process. Turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Cook's notes

This cake is typical of all-in-one sponge mixtures, in that it needs only a short amount of beating to combine all the ingredients into a smooth mixture.

Take care not to beat the mixture for longer than stated in the recipe, or the texture of the cake will be spoiled.

Strawberry lattice cake

12 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
50g / 2oz margarine, diced
100g / 4oz caster sugar
6.5ml / 1¼tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
1 egg, beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk
250g / 9oz thick strawberry jam
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the flour in a large bowl and rub in the margarine using the fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, baking powder, salt, egg and milk.
2 Beat well until smooth. Spread half the mixture evenly in a lightly greased 23cm / 9in round cake dish.
3 Spread half of the jam over the mixture. Cover with the remaining cake mixture. Make a lattice pattern on the top with the rest of the jam. Mix the sugar with the cinnamon and sprinkle evenly over the top.
4 Place the dish on an inverted plate in the cooker and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a ¼ turn every 3 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 6-8 minutes.
5 When the cake feels springy to the touch, remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 10 minutes to complete cooking.
6 This cake will probably be difficult to turn out, so it is best cooled in the dish and served straight from it too.

Microtips

To check a cake to see if it is cooked, use one of the following tests.

Insert a cocktail stick in the centre of the cake, avoiding the moist spots. It is done if the cocktail stick comes out clean.

The cake will shrink from the edges of the dish when done, or will feel springy to the touch.

If cooking in a glass dish, the cake is done when there are no damp spots visible on the bottom through the base of the dish.

How to microwave Strawberry lattice cake

Spread *half of the cake mixture in the greased dish and spread half of the strawberry jam carefully over the top. Cover with the remaining cake mixture. Spoon the rest of the jam in a lattice pattern over the top of the cake. Mix the sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the top.*

Place *the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a ¼ turn every 3 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for a further 6-8 minutes. Test the cake by using one of the methods listed in the Microtips above.*

Spice cake

10¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

200g / 7oz plain flour
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cloves
175ml / 6fl oz milk
75g / 3oz margarine, softened
1 egg, beaten

TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
75g / 3oz chopped nuts

SERVES 8-10

1 Place all the ingredients except those for the topping in a large bowl. Beat together using an electric mixer at low speed for 1-2 minutes until blended.
2 Spread in a greased 23cm / 9in round or 20cm / 8in square dish.
3 Place the butter or margarine in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted.
4 Place all the other topping ingredients in a bowl and stir in the melted butter. Mix well until crumbly.
5 Spread the topping over the cake.
6 Place the dish on an inverted plate in the cooker and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes.
7 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 4-8 minutes, rotating after 4 minutes.
8 Test for doneness after 4 minutes by pushing a cocktail stick into the centre. The cake is cooked when it comes out clean. The top will be springy to the touch. If the dish is glass, there should be just a little uncooked mixture visible through the base.
9 Leave to stand for 10 minutes to complete the cooking process. Turn out on to a wire rack to cool.

Marble cake

7¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz butter or margarine, softened
175g / 6oz caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
225g / 8oz self-raising flour
15ml / 1tbls cocoa powder, mixed with a little water
few drops of red food colouring
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

DECORATION
100g / 4oz butter
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
few drops of red food colouring
rose petals or crystallized petals

SERVES 8

1 Lightly grease a 20cm / 8in round cake dish and line the base with a circle of greaseproof paper.
2 Cream together the butter or margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs gradually, beating well after each addition.
3 Sift the flour, then fold into the creamed mixture with a large metal spoon. Divide the mixture equally between three bowls.
4 Mix the cocoa and water into one bowl of mixture. Add a few drops of red colouring to the second, and the vanilla flavouring to the third.
5 Alternating the colours, place spoonfuls of the three mixtures in the prepared dish. Lightly cut through the mixture with a knife.
6 Microwave at 100% (High) for about 7 minutes. Stand for 10-15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

7 Place the butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15 seconds, until soft but not melted.
8 Gradually mix in the icing sugar until thick and creamy. Stir in lemon juice and colouring.
9 Spread the icing over the whole cake, lifting it into rough peaks. Decorate with the petals.

Cook's notes

Be careful not to swirl the different coloured mixtures too much, or the definition of the marbling will be lost between the colours. Use a knife to cut through.

Below clockwise: *Date and Walnut Ring; Sultana Cake; Spice Cake and Marble Cake.*

RAY DUNS

Date and walnut ring

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz butter, diced
75g / 3oz dark soft brown sugar
2 eggs, beaten
175g / 6oz stoned dates, chopped
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
150ml / ¼pt milk

DECORATION
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
30-45ml / 2-3tbls water
walnut halves

SERVES 8

1 Sift the flour and salt. Rub in butter with the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in brown sugar.
2 Beat in the egg, then stir in the dates, walnuts and milk.
3 Turn into a lightly greased 2.3L / 4pt ring mould, or a bowl with a glass standing, open side up, in the middle.
4 Microwave the mould at 70% (Medium/High) for 10 minutes. Stand for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.
5 Mix the icing sugar with water to make a thick coating icing.
6 Spoon icing over the ring. Decorate with walnut halves.

Sultana cake

45 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb sultanas
225g / 8oz glacé cherries, halved
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz butter, softened
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
60ml / 4tbls milk

DECORATION
60ml / 4tbls apricot jam
25g / 1oz flaked almonds, toasted

SERVES 12

1 Lightly grease a 20cm / 8in round dish and line the base with a circle of greaseproof paper.
2 Mix the sultanas and cherries.
3 Sift the flour with the salt and add a little to the fruit. Toss to coat lightly with flour.
4 Beat the butter, lemon zest and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, beating well after each addition. Beat in the lemon juice.
5 Fold in remaining flour alternately with fruit. Mix in milk.
6 Spread evenly in the prepared dish and smooth the top. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 45 minutes, or until a skewer leaves the centre of the cake clean. Leave to stand for about 10 minutes, then allow to cool in the dish.
7 Turn out. Sieve the jam and stir in 15-30ml / 1-2tbls boiling water. Brush over the cake and decorate with almonds.

Fast freezer suppers

Use your freezer and microwave partnership to save time, effort and hard work. This way you will have some stunning suppers at the ready when you haven't the time, or inclination, to cook.

Ready-made meals stored in the freezer are always handy. Whether you just want to collapse in front of the television or suddenly have to entertain friends, a tasty meal waiting to be used from the freezer is the perfect answer.

Fish dishes freeze beautifully and can be thawed and cooked in the microwave in moments. The TV dinner given here uses plaice fillets, but fresh cod or mackerel would be equally successful. If you make up the potato and portion this out with the broccoli between the trays, the whole meal can be microwaved at once. Stacking trays, one on top of the other, means four meals can all be ready at the same time.

While eating the main course, individual chocolate mousses can be thawing at room temperature. Should you forget to take them out of the freezer, just microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for several 5 second bursts, taking care that they do not begin to melt. Leave to stand to complete thawing.

There are occasions when you need a more elegant meal, after the theatre or a cocktail party, or for an impromptu supper party. Scallop-salmon Kebabs (see page 564) are ideal for this. Succulent pieces of salmon and scallops are a real treat for everyone. Make up eight kebabs; this serves eight for a light supper or four as a filling main course. Followed by deliciously light Mandarin Upside-down Cakes, you will be more than satisfied. The cakes are ingeniously made in teacups and turned out for freezing. They take barely 10 minutes to thaw and can be ready to eat as soon as needed.

Stuffed Plaice Rolls and Chocolate Mousse

RAY DUNS

Stuffed plaice rolls

2 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb plaice fillets, 8 small or 4 large

STUFFING
1 onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter
75ml / 5tbls fresh breadcrumbs
70ml / 4½tbls chopped mixed nuts
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
large pinch of dried thyme
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
salt and pepper

TO SERVE
50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives or spring onion tops
60ml / 4tbls fish stock
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Carefully skin the plaice fillets and lay them, skinned side up, on a board.
2 For the stuffing, place the onion and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the onion is tender, stirring once. Stir in the crumbs, nuts, lemon zest, parsley, thyme, tomato purée, salt and pepper to taste and enough lemon juice to moisten.
3 Spread the stuffing on the fillets and roll up, from the tail end. Place on a cling film covered board and open-freeze while preparing the vegetables.

Piped potatoes and broccoli

8¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes
45ml / 3tbls water
15g / ½oz butter
½ small egg, beaten
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz frozen broccoli
40g / 1½oz butter for brushing

SERVES 4

1 Peel the potatoes and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes. Put into a large bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes until tender, stirring once. Leave the potatoes to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
2 Drain thoroughly and mash until smooth. Beat in the butter, enough egg to moisten, and seasoning. Pipe a serving on to each of the four trays.
3 Divide the broccoli between the trays. Put the butter in a small dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Spoon equally over the broccoli and potatoes.
4 Add the plaice fillets to each tray. Cover, label and freeze no longer than two months.

Chocolate mousse

6 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz plain chocolate
3 eggs, separated
15ml / 1tbls double cream
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
60ml / 4tbls double cream, whipped, to serve
grated chocolate, to decorate

SERVES 4

1 Break the chocolate into a large bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-7 minutes, until melted, stirring twice.
2 Beat the egg yolks, cream and vanilla into the chocolate. Whisk the egg whites until holding soft peaks, and fold into the mixture. Divide equally between four serving dishes. Cover, label and freeze, no longer than two months.

How to thaw and serve the Stuffed plaice TV dinner

Prepare *the sauce for the fish. Microwave the butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the chives, stock and seasoning. Pour over the fish half way through thawing, when re-stacking (see right), stirring before pouring.*

Cover *four trays with cling film and stack them in the cooker. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 20-22 minutes, until the fish flakes easily, re-stacking the trays four times. Allow 13-14 minutes for two trays, 6-7 minutes for one tray.*

RAY DUNS

Thaw *chocolate mousses at room temperature for 25-30 minutes while preparing the fish. Alternatively, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for three 5 seconds bursts. Leave to stand 5 minutes. Top with whipped cream and sprinkle with chocolate to decorate.*

Scallop-salmon * kebabs

35½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb fresh salmon, boned and skinned
450g / 1lb fresh scallops
16 small whole onions
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 16 pieces
1 lemon, cut into 8 wedges
15g / ½oz butter

TO SERVE
50g / 2oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
2.5ml / ½tsp dry vermouth
salt and pepper

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
For salmon, substitute thick gem-fish fillets.

How to freeze and microwave Scallop-salmon kebabs

Cut *the salmon into 24 × 2.5cm / 1in cubes. Cut the scallops in half or thirds to make 16 pieces. Thread the salmon, scallops, onions and pepper onto 8 × 23cm / 9in wooden skewers. Finish each kebab with a wedge of lemon.*

Arrange *on a greaseproof paper lined tray. Microwave the butter in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 15 seconds; brush over the kebabs. Open-freeze, then pack in two batches. Freeze for up to two months.*

To serve, *first prepare the sauce. Microwave butter in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Whisk in the marjoram, vermouth and seasoning. Use for basting kebabs during cooking.*

To thaw *the kebabs, remove one or two packs from the freezer. Unwrap and place on a roasting rack, evenly spaced. Cover with greaseproof paper. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium).*

Microwave *for 19-23 minutes for four kebabs, 34-37 minutes for eight, or until the scallops are opaque; baste with the sauce and rearrange 2-3 times, stirring sauce before basting.*

Increase *power to 100% (High). Cover and microwave the remaining sauce for 45-60 seconds or until heated. Stir and pour over the kebabs. Arrange on a plate to serve.*

Mandarin upside-down cakes

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

TOPPING

30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
312g / 11oz can mandarin segments in light syrup, well drained
25g / 1oz butter

CAKE

100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz self-raising flour, sifted with 1.5ml / ¼tsp baking powder

SERVES 8

RAY DUNN

1 Line eight teacups with cling film. Mix together the brown sugar and cinnamon and spoon equally into the bottom of the cups. Add the mandarin segments to each cup.

2 Cover and microwave the butter in a small dish at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Spoon into the cups.

3 For the cake, beat the butter and sugar together until soft and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs, then fold in the flour and baking powder. Divide the mixture evenly between the cups.

4 Arrange the cups in a circle in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, rotating the cups twice. Remove each when ready. To test if the cake is cooked, pierce the centre with a fine skewer — it should come out clean.

5 Allow to cool before turning out and freezing, sugared side up, as directed in Step 1, below.

TO SERVE

Unwrap the cakes and microwave four or eight cakes as directed in Steps 2-3, below. The cakes are thawed when a fine skewer can be easily inserted into the cake centres. Remove the cakes as they are thawed. Leave to stand while preparing and microwaving the fish kebabs. To eat hot, microwave the cakes at 50% (Medium) while eating the kebabs. Allow 7-8 minutes for four cakes and 10-12 minutes for eight, or until warm to touch. Add extra mandarin segments and whipped cream to decorate.

How to freeze and thaw Mandarin upside-down cakes

To freeze, *allow the cakes to cool before turning out. Wrap in cling film and pack in two freezer bags. Label and freeze up to two months.*

To thaw, *unwrap the cakes from one or two containers and arrange in a circle on a serving plate. Place in the cooker, uncovered.*

RAY DUNN

Microwave *four cakes at 20-30% (Defrost) for 7-8 minutes, rearranging once. Allow 10-12 minutes to thaw eight cakes, rearranging twice.*

STAR RECIPE

Polish casserole

Cabbages are vitamin packed and available all year round. This braised cabbage dish takes over an hour when cooked conventionally — using the microwave it can be ready in under 30 minutes!

The secret of the unique flavour of this dish lies in adding vinegar and sugar to the cabbage, which gives a delicious sweet-sourness. Serve it just as it is, or with the addition of any of the following to taste: garlic, crushed juniper berries, chopped capers, caraway or cumin seeds.

Polish casserole is substantial enough to be served as a complete meal in itself — all you need is rye bread.

Cooking this dish in the microwave is simplicity itself. Just bear in mind that the cabbage produces a lot of steam and the dish will consequently become extremely hot. Be very careful, therefore, when removing the cling film cover to stir the sausages.

The combination of the red cabbage with the soured cream garnish looks particularly attractive, but you can, if you prefer, use white cabbage (in which case you need only a third of the vinegar).

VARIATION

For a less substantial dish omit the sausages, kidney beans and chopped beetroot, and double the remaining ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for a total of 10 minutes, stirring twice.

Cooked this way the cabbage can be served hot — as an accompaniment to beef and game — or cold as an unusual salad to serve with quiches and sliced meats.

Freezer notes

Pack the cooked cabbage into a covered container and freeze for up to two months, without the garnish. To thaw Polish casserole, cover the dish with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, stirring twice until well heated.

DAVE KING

Polish casserole

12 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

225g / 8oz red cabbage, core and outer leaves removed
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
½ small onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls cider vinegar
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
15ml / 1tbls water
225g / 8oz smoked pork sausage
175g / 6oz chopped cooked beetroot
432g / 15oz can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
salt and pepper
soured cream and parsley

SERVES 4-6

How to microwave Polish casserole

Shred *the cabbage thinly. Place the butter and chopped onion in a large bowl. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until tender.*

RAY DUNS

Stir *in the vinegar, sugar and water, then add the shredded cabbage and mix well. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir twice.*

Slice *sausage thinly. Add to bowl with beetroot and beans. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes, until hot. Stir twice.*

Leave *to stand for 10 minutes. Season. Transfer to a serving dish, if wished. Serve topped with soured cream and chopped parsley.*

Microwaving jams

Capture the flavour of the season's fruit in pots of home-made jam. With the microwave, you can up-date a popular traditional cooking skill.

The microwave is ideal for making small quantities of jam — up to 2.5kg / 5lb. As fruits come into season you can make small batches at a time. There is no need to plan a whole afternoon's cooking in advance, you can simply make up a jam in a matter of moments, as the mood takes you. You can also make up one or two pots of more unusual jams, such as the Raspberry and redcurrant jam or the Cherry jam (see page 571.) Potted and covered attractively, these make the perfect gift for family or friends.

The short microwaving times and smaller quantities of jams allow the fruit to retain all their fresh flavour and vibrant colours. There is no danger of the jam burning or scorching, as it can do in a conventional preserving pan. Microwaving is altogether a cleaner way of making jam, because there is no splattering. Condensation during cooking is reduced, too, and odours and heat in the kitchen are minimal. With the microwave, making jam at home is easier, quicker and more satisfying then ever.

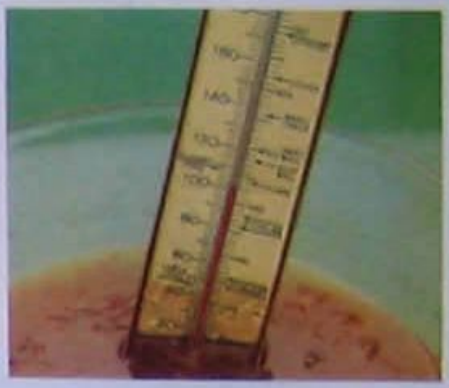
Top to bottom: *Rhubarb and Ginger Jam, Raspberry and Redcurrant Jam, Apricot Jam, Cherry Jam*

DAVE KING

How to test for setting point

Saucer test *Drop 5ml / 1tsp jam on to a chilled saucer and allow to cool. Push the surface with a finger. If the jam wrinkles, it has reached setting point.*

Spoon test *Stir the jam with a wooden spoon to coat. Cool slightly, then hold horizontally over the bowl. If ready, the jam should drop in flakes.*



Temperature test *Use a microwave thermometer in the cooker, or a conventional one outside. Setting point is 108-109°C (226-228°F).*

How to microwave jam

Wash *and dry the fruit; slice, peel or stone as necessary. Place the fruit in a large bowl. Add boiling water and lemon juice if using.*

Cover *with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes or until the fruit is soft, stirring twice. Set aside.*

Microwave *the sugar at 100% (High) to warm. Allow 2 minutes for 450g / 1lb, 2½ minutes for 700g / 1½lb, 3 minutes for 900g / 2lb.*

Add *the warmed sugar to the fruit and stir until completely dissolved. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, or until set (see above), stirring three times.*

Remove *any scum from the sides of the bowl with a slotted spoon, then allow the jam to cool slightly before ladling or pouring through a funnel into sterilized jars.*

Lay *waxed paper discs on the jam surface. Cover with screw top while the jam is hot but allow to cool if using cellophane covers and rubber bands. Label and store.*

RAY DUNS

Helpful hints

For making jam in the microwave you need very little equipment, just a heatproof, glass mixing bowl and a wooden spoon. The bowl must be able to withstand very high temperatures and should be large enough to hold the jam while boiling so it does not spill over the edge. Always handle the bowl with oven gloves as the boiling jam passes its heat to the bowl. Take the same care as when making jam conventionally.

Setting jam

Fruits vary in their pectin content, which affects the setting power of jam. Gain confidence by selecting fruits with a high pectin content first, such as gooseberries, as these set easily. When using fruits with a low pectin content, such as raspberries, cherries and apricots, either add lemon juice during cooking, or commercial pectin after cooking, following the manufacturer's instructions. Commercial pectin is sold in bottles and is available from supermarkets and chemists. Generally, chose fruit that is ripe but firm as it has a higher pectin content than over-ripe fruit.

Test for setting point by using the saucer, spoon or temperature method before the cooking time is up (see the steps on page 569). Microwave the jam a further minute if a set has not been achieved and test again. Continue to microwave and test until a satisfactory set is reached. This prevents the fruit from over-cooking. It is important to note that soft fruit jams thicken on cooling, so only need to wrinkle slightly in the saucer test. Over-cooked fruit gives jam a bitter taste. Cool the jam before potting so that any fruit is evenly distributed.

Storing

Jam jars should be sterilized before potting the jam. Do this in the conventional way by filling the jars with boiling water. Pour off the water and leave the jars to dry in a conventional low oven. After potting, cover the jam (see step 6, page 569) and keep in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months.

DAVE KING

Cook's notes

The sugar added to the fruit must dissolve completely before the mixture is cooked at a rolling boil. To encourage this, warm the sugar in the microwave (see Step 3, page 569). You can do this either in a bowl or in the bag in which it is packed.

Gooseberry jam

32 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb fresh or frozen gooseberries, thawed
275ml / ½pt boiling water
450g / 1lb sugar

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Top and tail the gooseberries and place in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl together with the boiling water. Microwave the fruit, covered, and warm the sugar as directed in Steps 2-3, page 569. Cook jam as for Step 4, page 569.

2 Remove the scum and leave to cool for 30 minutes, then ladle into sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Steps 5-6, page 569.

Raspberry and redcurrant jam

45½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb raspberries
225g / 8oz redcurrants, stripped from the stalk
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
900g / 2lb sugar

MAKES 1.2kg / 2½lb

1 Place the fruit in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl with the lemon juice.
2 Cover and microwave the fruit, removing lid after stirring once, and warm the sugar as directed in Steps 2-3, page 569.
3 Stir in the sugar, then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 28 minutes until setting point is reached; stir three times.
4 Leave the jam to cool for 10 minutes, then ladle into warm, sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Steps 5-6, page 569.

Microwave fresh fruits in season for a choice of mouthwatering jams.

Apricot jam

57½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb apricots
45ml / 3tbls boiling water
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
1 lemon, quartered
900g / 2lb sugar

MAKES 1.4kg / 3lb

1 Wash, halve, stone and roughly chop the apricots. Place in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl with the water, lemon juice and quarters.
2 Cover and microwave the fruit and warm the sugar as directed in Steps 2-3, page 569.
3 Stir in the sugar and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes to soften skins and dissolve the sugar; stir four times. Increase power to 100% (High) for 20 minutes until setting point is reached, stirring three times.
4 Remove any scum and the lemon quarters. Leave to cool for 30 minutes, then ladle into sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Step 6, page 569.

Blackberry and apple jam

26 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb blackberries
450g / 1lb prepared weight cooking apples, cored and sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
900g / 2lb sugar

MAKES 1.4kg / 3lb

1 Put the blackberries, apples and water in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until the fruit is soft, stirring once.
2 Place the sugar in a bowl and microwave as directed in Step 3, page 569.
3 Stir in the sugar and continue to microwave as directed in Step 4, page 569. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then ladle into warm, sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Steps 5-6, page 569.

Cherry jam

22 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb cherries
350g / ¾lb sugar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
50ml / 2fl oz commercial pectin

MAKES 540g / 1¼lb

1 Pick over and stone the cherries and place in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl together with the lemon juice.
2 Microwave the fruit, covered, at 100% (High) for 12 minutes, then warm the sugar as directed in Step 3, page 569.
3 Stir in the sugar until dissolved and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Stir in the pectin and allow to cool for 5 minutes, then ladle into sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Step 5-6, page 569.

Rhubarb and ginger jam

48 mins

Standing time: none

900g / 2lb rhubarb
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
grated zest of 1 lemon
900g / 2lb sugar
25g / 1oz piece fresh root ginger

MAKES 1.2kg / 2¾lb

1 Wash and trim the rhubarb and cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths. Place in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl together with the water, citrus zest and juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes or until soft, stirring once.
2 Microwave the sugar in a bowl as directed in Step 3, page 569. Stir into the rhubarb until dissolved.
3 Beat the ginger with a rolling pin to break down the fibres and release the flavour. Tie in a muslin bag and add to the rhubarb.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 35-38 minutes, or until setting point is reached, stirring three times.
5 Cool for 5 minutes, then ladle into sterilized jars, seal and label as directed in Step 6, page 569.

Prime steaks

Succulent, tender and tasty, prime steaks make wonderful meals. Cooked simply and quickly in a microwave, they are just as delicious as ever, especially served with Garlic Butter or Béarnaise Sauce.

Prime steaks — whether fillet, sirloin, T-bone or rump — are a great treat and it is natural to want the best possible result from cooking. Steaks cooked by microwave are just as tender as those cooked conventionally.

Although they can be cooked successfully without a browning dish by brushing the meat with a browning agent, if you plan to microwave steak frequently, a browning dish is a good investment, since it helps sear the meat.

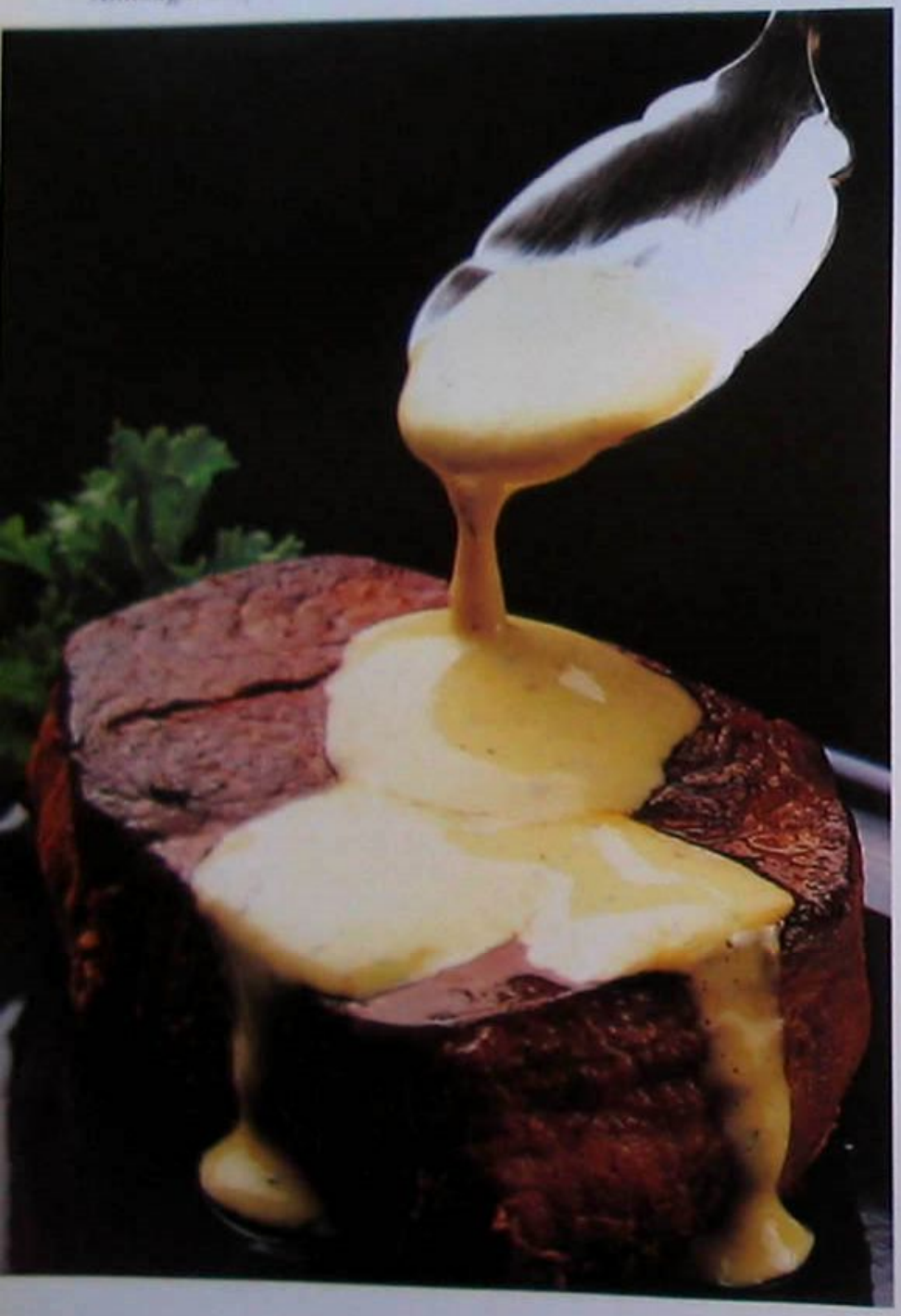
Follow the timings in the charts on page 573 and use the guide below to test for doneness. With a browning dish, stand meat for 1-2 minutes; otherwise stand for 3 minutes for rare/medium-rare steak; 5 minutes for medium/well done meat.

Rare: surface of meat should look cooked but have traces of red meat juices over parts of surface.

Medium-rare: red meat juices should come to the surface when steak is pressed firmly with a knife.

Medium: centre of meat should be slightly pink if pierced.

Well done: meat should be evenly brown and meat juices run clear when pierced with a knife.



Fillet steak with Béarnaise Sauce

Béarnaise sauce

1¼ mins

Standing time: none

3 egg yolks
15ml / 1tbls tarragon or wine vinegar
10ml / 2tsp chopped tarragon leaves or 5ml / 1tsp dried
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz well chilled unsalted butter
15ml / 1tbls grated onion

SERVES 4

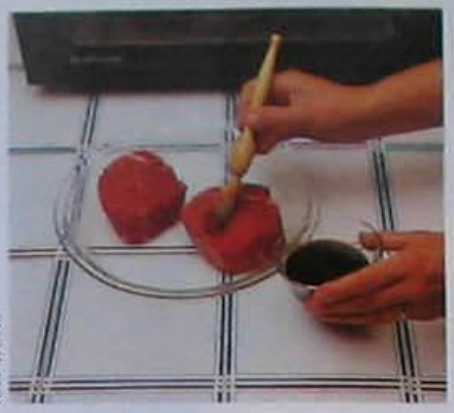
1 Whisk egg yolks, vinegar, tarragon and seasoning together in a bowl until blended.

2 Place 15g / ½oz of the butter in a bowl with the onion and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until onion is softened. Beat into egg yolk mixture.

3 Cut remaining butter into six pieces and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds or until butter is softened but not melted.

4 Gradually beat into egg yolk mixture until thickened and pale. Serve at once, spooned over the steak.

How to microwave Fillet steak



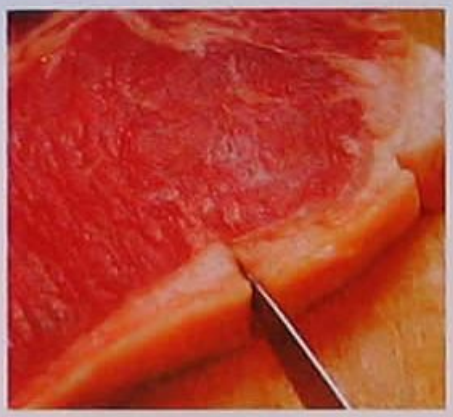
RAY DUNS

Dry *steak thoroughly on absorbent paper, then brush with 10ml / 2tsp soy sauce. Grease a shallow dish with 15g / ½oz melted butter or 10ml / 2tsp oil.*

Add *steaks and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3½ minutes, according to taste (see chart below). Drain juices; turn steaks over.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2½-4 minutes (see chart). Stand, covered with foil for 3 minutes for rare/medium rare; 5 minutes for medium/well done.*

How to microwave T-bone steak in a browning dish



Make *small cuts in fat of steak at 2.5cm / 1in intervals to prevent curling during cooking. Heat browning dish for 5 minutes or follow manufacturer's instructions.*

When *hot, add 10ml / 2tsp oil and tilt the dish to coat the base. Add steak, pressing down well for maximum contact and wait until sizzling dies down.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1¾-4½ minutes (see chart below — a 450g / 1lb T-bone steak is equivalent to 2x25g / 8oz steaks). Turn once. Stand for 1-2 minutes.*

Microwave times for steaks

STEAK COOKED WITHOUT A BROWNING DISH			STEAK COOKED IN A BROWNING DISH		
		2 x 225g / 8oz steaks or 1 x 450g / 1lb T-bone	4 x 225g / 8oz steaks	2 x 225g / 8oz steaks or 1 x 450g / 1lb T-bone	4 x 225g / 8oz steaks
RARE	1st side 2nd side	1½ mins 2½ mins	3-3½ mins 3½-4 mins	¾ min 1 min	1 min 1¾-2 mins
MEDIUM-RARE	1st side 2nd side	2-2½ mins 3 mins	3½-4 mins 4-4½ mins	1 min 1¼-1½ mins	1½ mins 2-2½ mins
MEDIUM	1st side 2nd side	2½-3 mins 3-3½ mins	4½-5 mins 4½-5 mins	1½ mins 1½-2 mins	2 mins 2½-3 mins
WELL DONE	1st side 2nd side	3½ mins 4-5 mins	5-6 mins 6-7 mins	2 mins 2½-3 mins	2½ mins 4½-5 mins

Garlic butter

¼ min

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz butter
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp French mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

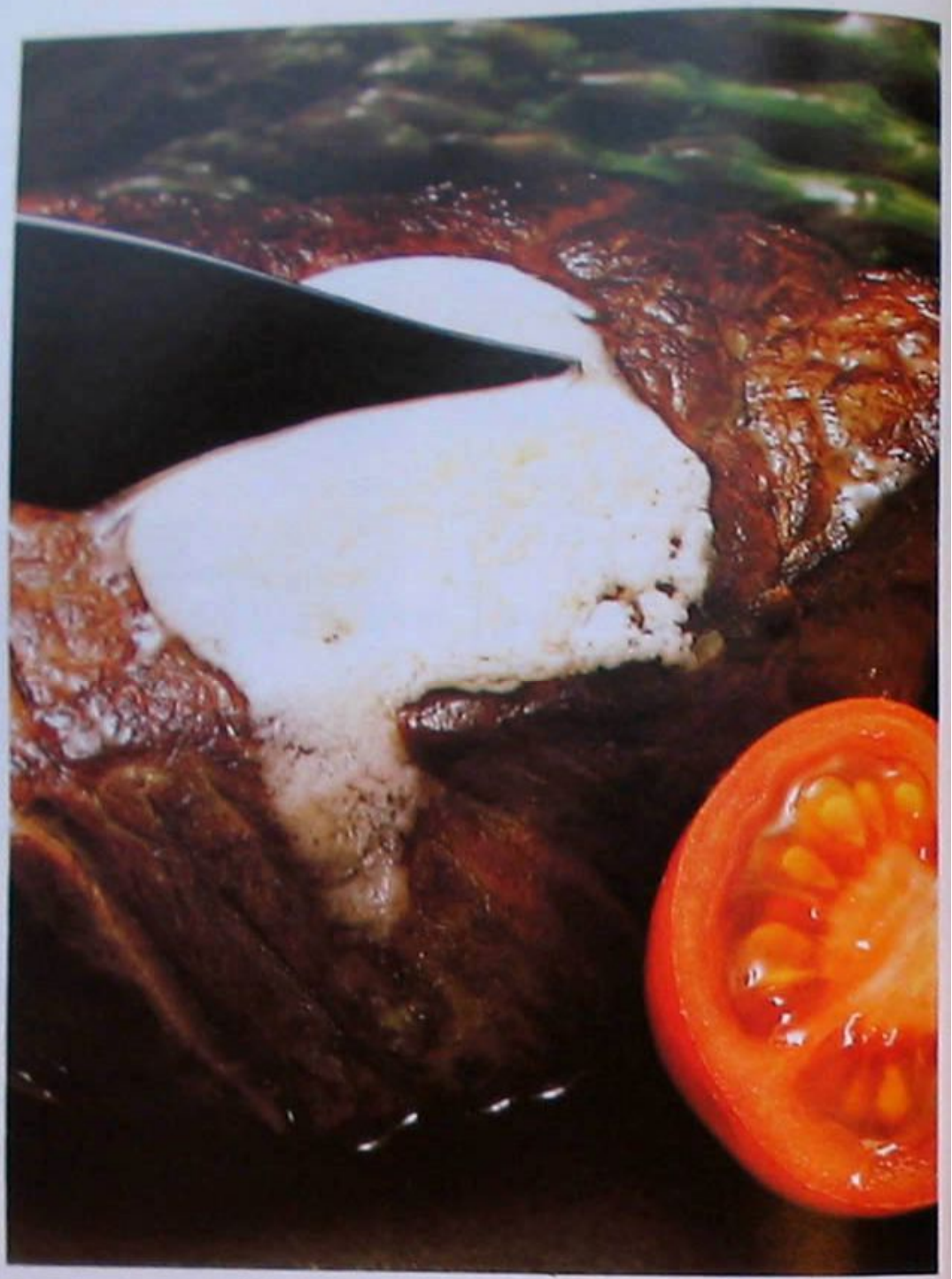
1 Cut butter into quarters and place in a small bowl.
2 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 20 seconds or until just softened.
3 Beat in garlic, mustard and seasoning and serve.

VARIATIONS
Chilli Butter: substitute ½ small red pepper and 1 chilli, seeded and finely chopped, for the garlic and mustard.
Blue Cheese and Watercress: substitute 50g / 2oz blue Stilton, mashed, plus 45ml / 3tbls chopped watercress for the garlic and mustard.

Rump Steak with Garlic Butter

Microtips

Low-fat spreads, which tend to separate when heated conventionally, work perfectly in a microwave and make a calorie-saving alternative to butter for weight-watchers. Simply halve the microwave time.



Rump steak with coriander

4½ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

2 x 450g / 1lb rump steaks, halved with excess fat removed
15ml / 1tbls oil

MARINADE
1 clove garlic, crushed
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
5ml / 1tsp ground coriander
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 4

1 Mix together garlic, lemon zest and juice, coriander and oil for the marinade.
2 Place steaks in a large shallow dish, add marinade, cover and refrigerate for 6-8 hours. Drain well and dry thoroughly.
3 Heat browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil, tilting dish to coat the base.
4 Add steak, pressing down well. When sizzling dies down, microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-7 minutes (see chart page 573), turning once. Stand for 1-2 minutes.

Microtips

This recipe can be made without a browning dish. Follow the steps for How to microwave Fillet steak (on page 573), omitting soy sauce. During microwaving, excess juices will collect in dish. A quick sauce can be made with these: add 45ml / 3tbls natural yoghurt, 2.5ml / ½tsp sugar, seasoning and leftover marinade to 45ml / 3tbls meat juices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds and serve with the steaks.

Microtips

T-bone steak is the largest steak of all — a 2.5cm / 1in thick piece weighs around 450g / 1lb. Cook one at a time, following timings for 2 x 225g / 8oz steaks. Cut from the bone into two small steaks after cooking to serve two.

Cook's notes

Always dry steak thoroughly before searing in a browning dish, otherwise meat will 'steam' and not develop a rich, appetizing colour. For extra browning, flash under hot grill for 1 minute.

Sirloin steak with oysters

7 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

4 x 225g / 8oz sirloin steaks, each about 2.5cm / 1in thick
2 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, and chopped
105g / 4oz can smoked oysters, drained
grated zest of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls oil

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon and onion in small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until onion is soft.
2 Stir oysters, lemon zest, parsley and seasoning into onions and bacon mixture.
3 Using a sharp knife, make horizontal cuts into steak to form pockets for oyster mixture. Divide mixture among steak cavities.
4 Heat browning dish for 5 minutes or follow manufacturer's instructions. When hot, add oil, tilting dish to coat the base. Add steak and press down.
5 When sizzling dies down, microwave at 100% (High) for 2¾-7 minutes (see chart page 573), turning once. Stand for 1-2 minutes.

Fillet Steak with Ginger Wine

Fillet steak with ginger wine

7¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 x 4cm / 1½in thick fillet steaks, about 175g / 6oz each
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
6mm / ¼in fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
25g / 1oz cream cheese
salt and pepper
15g / ½oz butter
10ml / 2tsp oil
2 large mushrooms
2 slices bread, cut into 9cm / 3½in rounds
60ml / 4tbls ginger wine

SERVES 2

1 Coat steaks thoroughly with soy sauce. Mix root ginger, cheese and seasoning in a small bowl.
2 Place butter and oil in a shallow baking dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
3 Brush mushrooms with a little of the butter and set aside. Add bread to baking dish, coating well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Turn over and cook for 1 minute or until turning crisp. Drain on absorbent paper, then spread with cheese mixture.
4 Add steaks to dish and cook at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn and cook for a further 2 minutes.
5 Place steaks on prepared bread rounds, return to baking dish and spoon over the ginger wine.
6 Top each steak with a mushroom and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds or until heated through. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Microtips

Cooking times in all recipes are for 'medium' steak. In this recipe, allow 1 minute on each side for rare steak; 3 minutes on each side for well done meat.

Beef olives

34 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700g / 1½lb rump steak, cut into 4, with excess fat removed
75g / 3oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, sliced
3 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp dried sage
3 slices white bread, diced
pepper

SAUCE
25g / 1oz plain flour
275ml / ½pt beef stock
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce

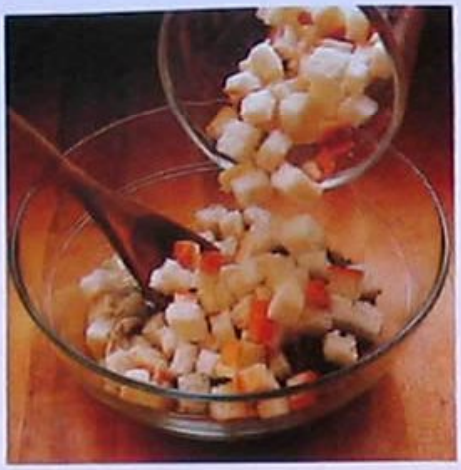
SERVES 4

Cook's notes

The sauce and stuffing in this recipe means that the steak cooks more slowly than it would if microwaved by itself — it takes longer for the microwaves to penetrate through the rolled meat and into the stuffing. The sauce also acts as a shield for the food, keeping the meat tender and moist preventing it from drying out.

How to microwave Beef olives

Place *steaks on a board or other flat surface and pound to 6mm / ¼in thickness with the edge of a saucer or a meat mallet. This tenderizes the meat as well as flattening it out.*



Place *mushrooms, onion, celery, bacon and butter in a bowl and microwave uncovered at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Add parsley, sage, bread and season.*

Spoon *stuffing on to steak. Roll up and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Make sauce by blending flour with a little beef stock, then whisk in remaining ingredients.*

Microwave *sauce uncovered at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until thickened, stirring once. Arrange beef olives in a shallow dish. Spoon over sauce and cover.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes. Re-arrange beef olives and microwave for a further 10 minutes. Allow to stand, covered, for 10 minutes before serving.*

Adapting a recipe: haricots

Cooking dried haricot beans in the microwave cooker produces tender, whole beans with an appetizing firmness — and saves both time and energy costs.

Dried haricot beans, like other pulses need water to rehydrate, so you should not reduce liquid content when converting a conventional recipe to cook in the microwave. The beans also require time in which to tenderize. This is not greatly reduced by cooking in the microwave, where gentle cooking at 50% (Medium) is still needed to make sure the beans soften.

Where you do save time is when using the beans with other ingredients in a dish which requires long, gentle simmering to blend the flavours. In this case, savings on energy costs are quite substantial. Cassoulet (see recipe) can take up to five hours to cook conventionally for instance, but well under two in the microwave.

Another benefit from microwaving is the appearance of the cooked beans which retain their shape as they are not broken up by frequent stirring. The texture of beans cooked in the microwave is also very good. They soften completely, yet still retain an appetizing 'bite'.

Cassoulet

DAVE KING

Cassoulet

102 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

350g / 12oz white haricot beans, rinsed and drained
1.1L / 2pt water
100g / 4oz boneless pork, cut into 1cm / ½in cubes
1 small garlic clove, crushed
1 onion, chopped
425g / 15oz can tomatoes, chopped
50ml / 2fl oz white wine
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
large pinch of black pepper
175g / 6oz Polish sausage, cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
275ml / ½pt hot chicken stock
2 bacon rashers, rinds removed, chopped
1 bouquet garni
large pinch dried thyme
large pinch salt

SERVES 4-6

1 Microwave the beans and water in a covered 2.8L / 5pt casserole at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, until boiling. Stir once. Boil for 2 minutes, then remove and leave to soak, covered, for 1 hour.

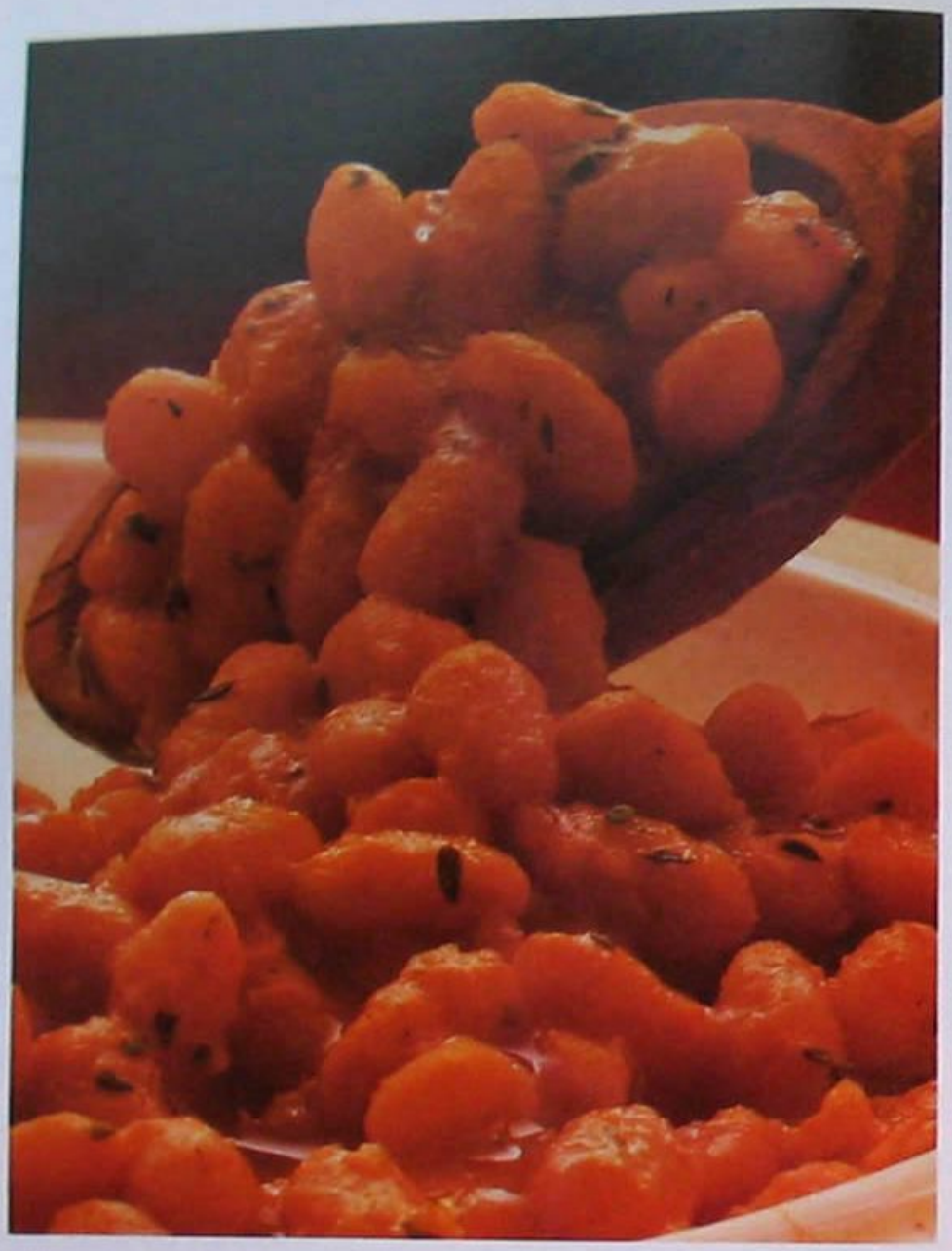
2 Microwave the pork, garlic and half the onion in a covered 1.1L / 2pt casserole at 50% (Medium) for 6-7 minutes, until the pork is no longer pink. Stir three times. Remove and reserve the pork.

3 Add the tomatoes and juice, wine, parsley and pepper to casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Stir once. Stir in pork, cool, then refrigerate until required.

4 Drain the beans, reserving the soaking liquid, and return them to the 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Mix in the remaining onion, the sausage, stock, bacon and herbs. Stir in 575ml / 1pt of the reserved liquid.

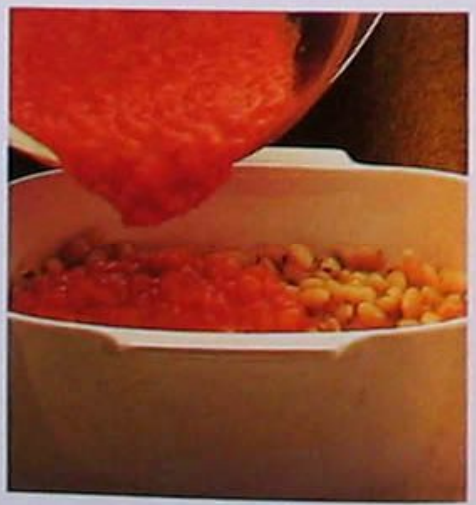
5 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1¼ hours, or until the beans are tender but not mushy, stirring two to three times.

6 Discard the bouquet garni. Stir in salt to taste, and the sauce, then cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-18 minutes, stirring once. Stand for 15 minutes. Serve with bread and salad.



How to microwave Beans in Tomato Sauce

Use *the full amount of water needed conventionally, both to soften beans in microwave before leaving them to soak and for the initial cooking.*



Combine *the partially cooked beans and the tomato sauce. Microwave for 40-50 minutes at 100% (High), adding soaking liquor as required.*

Beans in tomato sauce

112 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Microwave beans in a well-flavoured tomato sauce for an appetizing glaze and texture.

350g / 12 oz white haricot beans, rinsed
1.1L / 2pt water
2 tender celery stalk tops
1 onion, quartered
3 parsley sprigs
2 garlic cloves
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
large pinch salt

TOMATO SAUCE
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine, cut into small pieces
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt hot chicken stock
142g / 4½oz can tomato purée
large pinch black pepper
SERVES 4-6

1 In a 2.8L / 5pt casserole, combine the beans and water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, until they come to the boil. Continue to boil for 2 minutes, then remove from the microwave and leave to soak, covered, for 1 hour.
2 After 1 hour, add the celery and onion to the soaking beans. Tie the parsley, garlic, basil and thyme in a small piece of muslin and add to the casserole.
3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 minutes, or until the beans are tender, stirring two or three times. Drain, and reserve the liquor. Remove and discard the muslin bag and celery and leave the beans to stand, covered, while you make the sauce.
4 For the sauce, add the onion, garlic and butter to a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, until the onion is tender. Blend in the flour, then add the chicken stock and tomato purée. Stir well and season to taste with pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until thickened, stirring three or four times during cooking.
5 Add the sauce to the beans, in the 2.8L / 5pt casserole, cover the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 40-50 minutes or until the beans are soft, stirring two or three times. If more cooking liquid is needed add the reserved cooking liquor.
6 About 10 minutes before the end of the cooking time, season to taste with salt. Leave to stand for 10 minutes then serve with a crisp green salad.

Cook's notes

When cooking dried beans always add salt for seasoning towards the end of microwaving time. Salt draws moisture out of the beans and if added too early will make them tough.

Always buy dried beans from a healthfood shop or supermarket with a quick turnover; old, stale beans will not tenderize, no matter how long they are cooked.

Beans in tomato sauce

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

350g/12oz white haricot beans, rinsed
1.1L/2pt water
2 tender celery stalk tops
1 onion, quartered
3 parsley sprigs
2 garlic cloves
2.5ml/½tsp dried basil
1.5ml/¼tsp dried thyme
1.5ml/¼tsp salt

TOMATO SAUCE
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
40g/1½oz butter or margarine, cut into small pieces
15ml/1tbls plain flour
575ml/1pt hot chicken stock
142g/4½oz can tomato purée
large pinch of black pepper
SERVES 4-6

2.8L/5pt casserole

Microwave at 100% (High)

1 Combine the beans and water in a large heavy-based saucepan or flameproof casserole. Bring to the boil, boil for 2 minutes then remove, cover and leave to soak for 1 hour.

Microwave at 50% (Medium)

2 After 1 hour add the celery and onion to the beans. Tie the parsley, garlic, basil and thyme in muslin and add to the casserole.

3 Simmer, covered, for 1 hour or until the beans are tender but not soft. Drain and reserve the cooking liquor. Remove and discard the herbs from the casserole and reserve the beans.

2.3L/4pt casserole

Microwave at 100% (High)

4 To make the sauce, sauté the onion and garlic in the butter in a large saucepan until the onions are soft. Stir in the flour and then the rest of the sauce ingredients.

Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes

Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring frequently.

Microwave at 100% (High)

40-50 minutes

5 Add the sauce to the beans. Cover and simmer for 1 hour or until the beans are soft. Stir frequently and add the reserved cooking liquor to the beans, as needed. Season with salt 10 minutes before the end of cooking.

Stir 2-3 times

Quick cheese and egg dishes

Perfect for last-minute meals, these speedy egg and cheese dishes are tasty, filling and nutritious too; and the ingredients are all easily at hand.

Cheese and eggs are the perfect store-cupboard standbys. Cheap and nutritious, they offer a wide range of dishes, from simple snacks to complete meals in themselves.

Both have a high fat content, and so are ideally suited to microwave cooking. In fact, cheese will cook so successfully that it can often melt too quickly and toughen, so it is best to add it at the end of microwaving time rather than at the beginning. When using it in a dish that must be heated for some time, select 50% (Medium) power. At 100% (High) power, you will have to stir the mixture frequently.

Eggs too will cook successfully in a microwave, though there are a few points worth remembering. Firstly, they will cook completely differently than in an ordinary oven. In a conventional oven, the white of the egg generally cooks first, whereas in a microwave it is the yolk that cooks first, since it has

Italian Cannelloni

a higher fat content. If you microwave until the white is set, therefore, the yolk will harden. That is why standing time is always essential in an egg dish.

The size of the eggs may make a difference. The recipes here all use medium eggs — if you use large or small ones, it will affect both timing and results. The microwave patterns of individual cookers can affect cooking times, so much so that two cookers of the same make and model may not produce the same results.

Finally, there's one very important 'don't'. *Don't* ever try to hard-boil an egg in its shell in the microwave — it will explode!

Italian cannelloni

18½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

8 cannelloni tubes, cooked as directed on page 307 and drained (or pre-cooked type)

SAUCE

225g / 8oz minced beef
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, chopped
425g / 15oz canned tomato sauce (see Cook's notes)

FILLING

225g / 8oz cream cheese
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

There are several canned sauces available for pasta. 'Milanese' is just as suitable for this dish as 'Tomato'.

Pre-cooked cannelloni is very brittle so take care when putting in the filling. There should be a slight space between each tube in the dish. This will allow them to cook more evenly.

How to microwave Italian cannelloni

Put *the minced beef into a large bowl, add the garlic and onion. Stir well to mix. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until meat is no longer pink, stirring once. Drain off juices.*

Add *the canned tomato sauce to the beef, garlic and onion. Stir well to mix. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once.*

Prepare *the filling. In a medium-sized bowl combine the cream cheese, 15ml / 1tbls of the Cheddar cheese and 30ml / 2tbls of the Parmesan cheese with the egg, chopped parsley and seasoning. Stir well to mix.*

Spread *about 45ml / 3tbls of the cooked tomato sauce in a shallow dish (about 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in). Fill the cannelloni tubes with the cream cheese mixture, using a spoon to press the filling down well.*

Arrange *the filled cannelloni in a row in the dish. Pour the remaining tomato sauce over the top. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 13-16 minutes, turning dish twice during cooking.*

Sprinkle *the remaining grated Cheddar and Parmesan cheese over the top of the tomato sauce and the cooked cannelloni. Cover the dish with vented cling film and leave to stand for 3-5 minutes until the cheese has melted.*

Swiss eggs

9½ mins

Standing time: 8 mins

4 bacon rashers, rinds removed
8 eggs
45ml / 3tbls milk
salt and pepper
½ small green pepper, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz Gruyère cheese, grated

SERVES 4

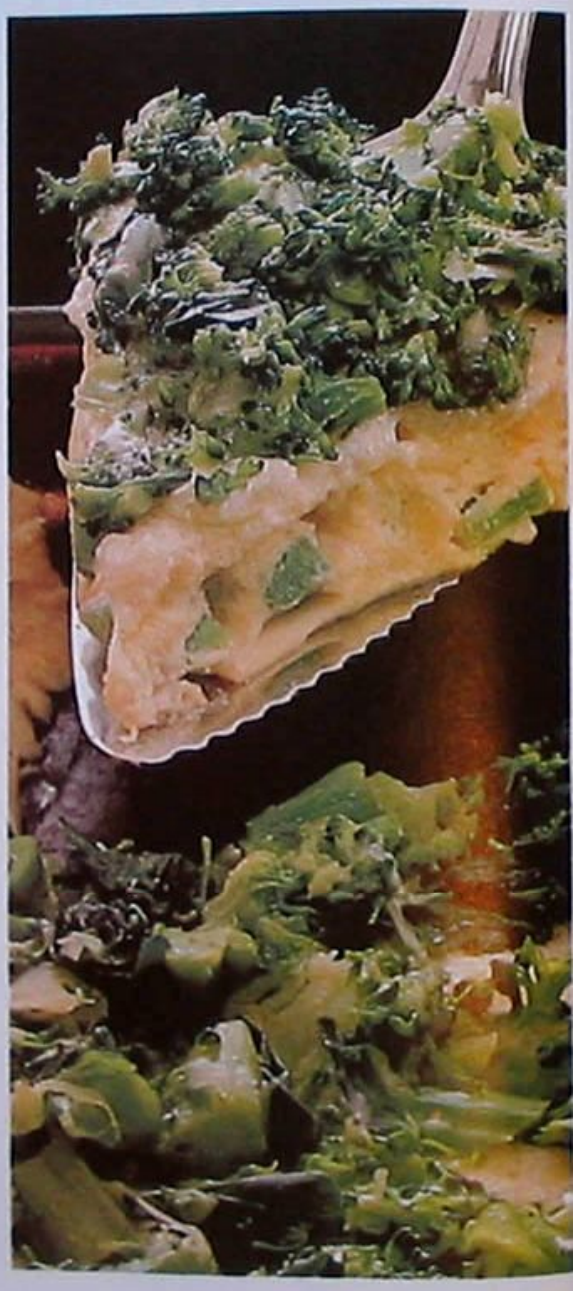
1 Arrange the bacon on three layers of absorbent paper with more paper on top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, turning and rotating rashers, removing each as it is crisp. Stand for 5 minutes, then crumble.
2 Break eggs into a bowl. Whisk in milk and seasoning.
3 Mix the green pepper, onion and butter in a shallow dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
4 Pour egg mixture into the dish and add the bacon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes, then twice more to allow moist egg to run through.
5 When egg is almost set, stir in the cheese. Stand 3-5 minutes for cheese to melt. If necessary, microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 30 seconds to complete cooking.

VARIATION

Swiss eggs for two:
2 bacon rashers, rinds removed
3 eggs
15ml / 1tbls milk
salt and pepper
½ small green pepper, chopped
½ small onion, chopped
8g / ¼oz butter or margarine
40g / 1½oz Gruyère cheese, grated

Cook Swiss eggs as above with the following alterations: Microwave bacon at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes. Use a smaller dish (about 15cm / 6in wide) and cook vegetables at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Microwave egg mixture at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Add cheese; stand for 2 minutes.

Above: *Swiss Eggs*
Right: *Broccoli Omelette*



Microtips

Because some people like their eggs more cooked than others, check the mixture each time you stir it to suit your own taste. There should be sufficient heat to melt the cheese without further microwaving, but this depends on how firmly the eggs are set.

Broccoli omelette

9 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz broccoli spears
30ml / 2tbls water
40g / 1½oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper
4 eggs separated
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 small green pepper, finely chopped
75ml / 3fl oz milk
5ml / 1tsp plain flour
15g / ½oz butter or margarine

SERVES 4-5

1 Finely chop the broccoli. Put into a large bowl with the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until just

tender. Drain, then stir in the cheese and seasoning. Cover while cooking the omelette.

2 In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, onion, green pepper, milk and flour. Season well. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until standing in stiff peaks. Fold into the yolk mixture.

3 Put butter into a shallow dish (about 25cm / 10in wide). Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until melted and the dish is hot. Using oven gloves, tilt dish to coat it with butter.

4 Pour in the egg mixture and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 6-7 minutes until the egg is set, stirring three or four times.

5 Spread broccoli and cheese mixture on top. Serve hot, cut into wedges, with boiled potatoes or with fingers of buttered toast.

VARIATION

Broccoli omelette for two: use half the ingredients above and a smaller dish (about 15cm / 6in wide); make the following alterations. Cook the broccoli at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Microwave the egg mixture at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-3½ minutes, stirring three times.

Microtips

During the first 2 minutes cooking, the whisked egg whites set more quickly than the yolks and will become dry if not stirred into the yolk mixture underneath. The dish can be rotated after stirring.

A little vinegar added with the seasoning to the cooked broccoli will bring out its flavour.

Denver sandwiches

5½ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
½ small green pepper, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
3 large eggs
15ml / 1tbls milk
large pinch of mustard powder
salt and pepper

dash Worcestershire sauce
50g / 2oz cooked ham, chopped
4 rounds toast or 2 muffins, split, toasted and buttered

SERVES 4

1 Grease four small saucers with a little of the butter.

2 Put the green pepper, onion and remaining butter into a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring once, until tender.

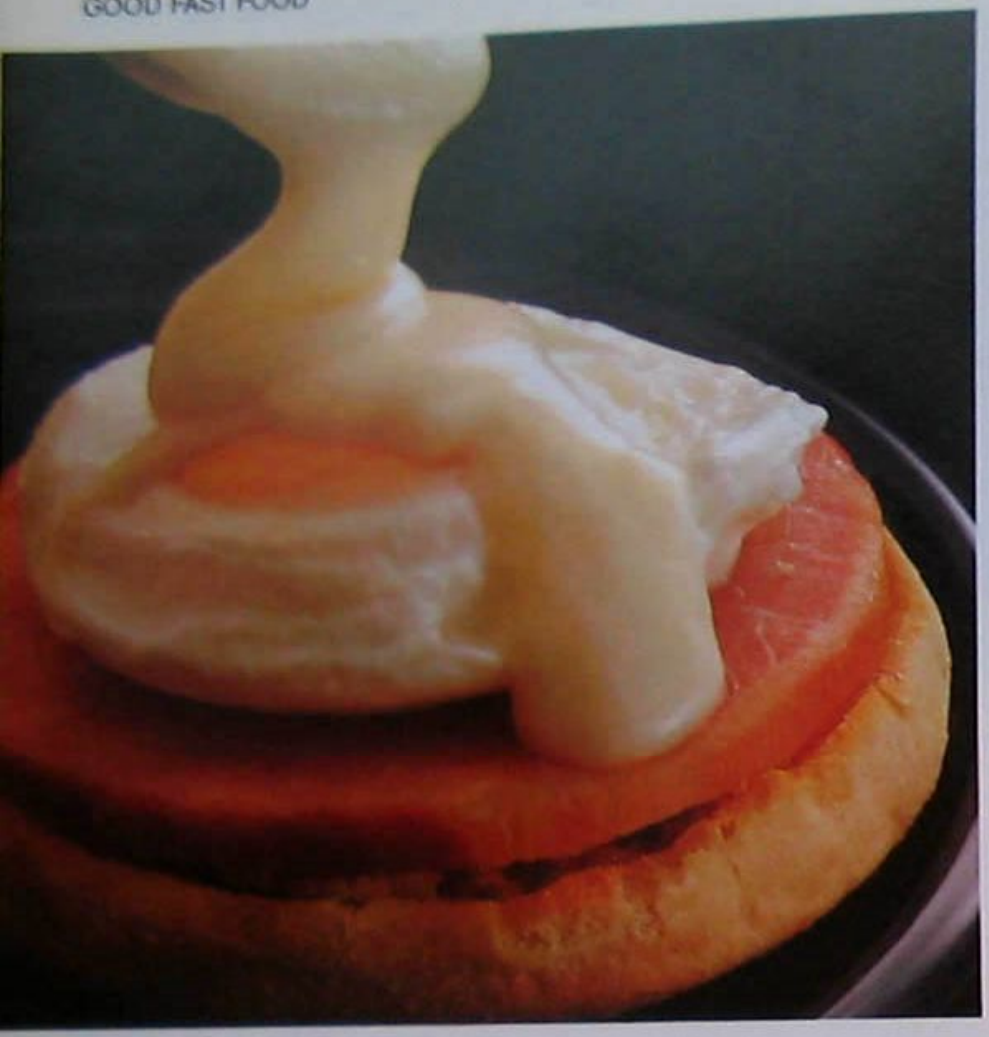
3 Whisk the eggs, milk, mustard, seasoning and Worcestershire sauce together. Stir in the ham and vegetables.

4 Divide the mixture equally between the saucers. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, stirring twice so that moist egg runs through to cook evenly. When just set, loosen and turn out on to buttered toast or muffins.

Denver Sandwiches

Cook's notes

Season the egg mixture well, but take care with salt depending on the type of ham used. You can add cream instead of milk if you prefer, to make a slightly richer mixture. The saucers may need to be turned around after each stirring so all the 'omelettes' are ready at once.



Mock Eggs Benedict

Creamed peas and cauliflower

9½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

275g / 10oz cauliflower florets
175g / 6oz frozen peas
30ml / 2tbls water

SAUCE
1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt single cream or evaporated milk
150ml / ¼pt water
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls chopped red pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Put the cauliflower, peas and water into a large bowl. Microwave covered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Stand, covered for 2-3 minutes, then drain.

2 Meanwhile make the sauce: put the onion and butter into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.

3 Stir in the flour, then whisk in the cream, water, stock cube, red pepper, parsley, thyme and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, whisking after 1 minute and then every 30 seconds, until thickened. Stir in the cheese.

4 Drain the vegetables, put into a dish and pour over the hot sauce.

Cook's notes

The vegetables and sauce can be mixed together before serving, if liked. You can reheat leftover cooked vegetables in the cream sauce. Cook at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes. Serve with hot, crusty French bread or with toast.

Mock eggs Benedict

6 mins

Standing time: 5-6 mins

2 bacon steaks (50g / 2oz each) or thick rounds of cooked ham
60ml / 4tbls hot water
2.5ml / ½tsp vinegar
2 eggs

SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
75ml / 3fl oz milk
40g / 1½oz Cheddar cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
1 large bap or muffin, split and toasted

SERVES 2

1 If using bacon steaks, put them on a plate, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until tender, rotating once. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, divide hot water and vinegar between two individual ramekin dishes. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, until water boils. Break an egg into each and prick yolks. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1-1½ minutes, rotating the dishes twice, until just set. Stand 2-3 minutes.

3 Put butter into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds to melt.

4 Stir in the flour, then whisk in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, whisking twice until thick. Add cheese, lemon juice and seasoning.

5 Put bacon steaks or ham (see Microtips) on the bap or muffin halves. Drain eggs and put on the bacon. Spoon hot sauce over.

Microtips

If using cooked ham, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds to heat through.

The eggs can be cooked 30-45 seconds longer if you prefer them firm.

Freezing bread dough

With a batch of dough in your freezer you can have home-made bread whenever you like. Thawing, rising, proving and cooking can all be done in the microwave, producing irresistible hot rolls or loaves in minutes.

Mixing and kneading are the hardest parts of bread-making. So get all the hard work over and freeze a batch of dough, ready for shaping and baking when you want it.

Freezing

The best time to freeze dough is immediately after kneading, before it starts to rise. Freeze it in 900g / 2lb quantities — this amount will thaw successfully in the microwave without starting to cook — for no longer than 5 weeks.

Shape the dough roughly into a loaf form, so that it will fit into a loaf dish for thawing, then wrap it tightly in an oiled freezer bag. Alternatively, form it into a ball and freeze in an oiled freezer bag large enough to hold the dough when it has doubled in size. This allows you to thaw the dough in the bag, but without a water bath (see Thawing below) there is more chance of it drying out in the hot spots in your oven.

Thawing

To use the frozen dough, unwrap it and turn it into a greased loaf dish, large enough to hold it when doubled in size. Place the dish in a container of hot water. The water absorbs some of the microwave energy so the microwaves are not concentrated only on the bread. Alternatively, microwave the dough in the bag (see Microtips, page 586).

Shaping and proving

Rise the dough at 10% (Low). If your microwave does not have this setting, rise the dough at room temperature. Once risen, turn it out on to a lightly floured surface and knead it briefly. Shape the dough, then allow it to rise or 'prove' again before baking. Using water in the microwave creates steam, which helps the dough to rise and makes the bread moister.

KAY DUNS

Caraway Knots, browned under the grill

Baking

Remove the dish of water before you bake the bread. Place the loaf dish or plate on an inverted dish as this helps the microwaves to reach the base of the loaf and encourages more even cooking.

Using dried yeast

If fresh yeast is hard to find, use dried. Substitute 15ml / 1tbls dried active baking yeast for the fresh yeast in the Basic Rich Dough recipe and continue as directed. Alternatively, use one sachet of easy-blend dried yeast. This does not need to be reconstituted — just sprinkle it over the flour and sugar and stir in well before adding any liquid.

Basic rich dough

21 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

15g / ½oz fresh yeast
45ml / 3tbls warm water
5ml / 1tsp sugar
100ml / 3½fl oz warm milk
1 egg
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
yellow food colouring (optional)
300g / 11oz strong white flour

MAKES 900g / 2lb DOUGH

1 Sprinkle the fresh yeast on to the warm water, mix well with the sugar and stand in a warm place for 15-30 minutes until frothy.
2 Continue to prepare the dough as directed in Steps 2-7 for Basic Rich Bread, pages 310-311.
3 Form the dough into a rectangular shape if thawing as directed in the steps, below, and wrap in a freezer bag. If thawing in the bag, (see Microtips, right), lightly oil a large freezer bag. Seal, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Thaw as directed in the steps, below. To rise the dough, place it in a large greased bowl and stand in a dish of hot water. Cover with non-stick paper. Microwave at 10% (Low) for 4 minutes, then leave to stand for 15 minutes. Repeat until the dough has doubled in size. Knead the dough and leave to rest for 5 minutes. Bake in the microwave as directed in the steps on page 313, or divide in half and use to bake a Plaited Loaf and a batch of Caraway Knots.

Microtips

To thaw the dough in the bag, remove the seal and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes, turning after 2 minutes. Let stand for 10-15 minutes.

Plaited loaf

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

½ quantity Basic Rich Dough, thawed (see steps, bottom)
strong white flour for dusting

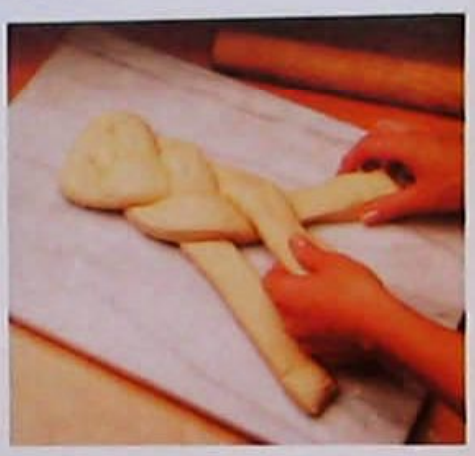
MAKES 1 LOAF

1 Plait the dough, then place the loaf in a loaf dish. Dust the top of the dough with flour. Stand the dish in a container of hot water and cover loosely with non-stick baking paper.
2 Prove the shaped loaf by micro-

How to shape a Plaited loaf

RAY DUNS

Roll out *the dough to a 30 × 10cm / 12 × 4in rectangle. Cut into three, lengthways, without cutting through one end, so strands are still joined.*



Plait *the strands, starting from the joined end and crossing the outside strands over the centre. Finish the plait by pressing loose ends together.*

How to thaw frozen Basic rich dough

Pour *275ml / ½pt boiling water into a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in baking dish. Thickly grease a loaf dish large enough to hold the frozen dough when risen. Unwrap dough and grease all over.*

Place *dough in loaf dish; stand in the hot water. Cover with non-stick baking or greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes; rotate ¼ turn every minute. Turn dough.*

Microwave *a further 2 minutes; rotate ¼ turn after 1 minute. Let stand 10-15 minutes. The dough should be soft to touch. If not, microwave for 1 minute at a time until ready.*

waving at 10% (Low) for 2 minutes. Let stand for 15 minutes, then repeat until the loaf has doubled in size.
3 Remove the dish from the water and place in the cooker on an inverted plate or saucer.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, then at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Rotate the dish two or three times during microwaving. Test the bread by pressing the surface; if it springs back, the loaf is cooked.
5 Leave to stand for 5 minutes before transferring to a rack to cool. Use the bread the same day as baking, as it does not keep well.

Freshly baked Plaited Loaf

Caraway knots

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

½ quantity Basic Rich Dough, thawed (see steps, opposite)
15ml / 3tsp caraway seeds
milk for brushing

MAKES 8-10 ROLLS

1 Knead 10ml / 2tsp caraway seeds into the dough. Shape into eight or ten knots (see steps, right) and brush with the milk. Sprinkle with the remaining caraway seeds. Arrange in a circle on a piece of non-stick baking sheet on the base tray or cooker floor together with a glass of hot water.
2 Prove at 10% (Low) for 2 minutes. Let stand for 15 minutes, then repeat until the dough has doubled in size.
3 Remove the glass of water from the cooker and increase power to 50% (Medium).
4 Microwave for 3 minutes, then increase power to 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Rotate the plate twice during microwaving. Test whether a roll is baked by pressing the surface; if it springs back, the roll is cooked. Remove the rolls as they are ready.
5 Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then brown under a hot grill. Cool on a wire rack. Serve the same day as baking as the knots quickly become stale.

Shaping the knots

Divide *the dough into eight to ten pieces. Roll each into a 35cm / 14in rope. Loop each rope, crossing over the ends and twisting once.*

Spread *out the tips, then lift the loop over to meet up with the tips. Pinch the loop and tip ends together to seal. Repeat with each rope.*

RAY DUNS

International desserts

Make a fitting finale to any meal with one of these classic international desserts. The microwave can help you to create authentic and delicious dishes in less than half the time of conventional cooking.

This tempting selection of desserts from places as far-flung as Florida and Sweden will show off the versatility of your microwave to the best advantage and you will find the fast, clean efficiency of your microwave invaluable.

Baked sponge puddings and cake desserts are light and moist cooked by microwave – irresistible when fresh. The Plum Duff should be eaten hot, or be refreshed by microwaving at 100% (High) for 30 seconds per portion if necessary. The Devil's Food cake stays moist because of the frosting and the almonds in the mixture, so it will keep for 1-2 days in the refrigerator. Lemon Zabaglione starts to lose volume after a few minutes, so serve immediately.

Florida Orange Mousse

Florida orange mousse

2½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Microwaving is an ideal way to thaw frozen orange juice concentrate, whether you intend to use it for a dessert or for a drink.

178ml / 6¼fl oz frozen or liquid orange juice concentrate
3 eggs, separated
75g / 3oz caster sugar
15ml / 1tbls orange-flavoured liqueur (optional)
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
45ml / 3tbls water
150ml / ¼pt double cream

DECORATION
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
1 small orange, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls chopped nuts

SERVES 4-6

1 Remove any metal lid or surround from the carton of orange juice and microwave at 25% (Defrost) for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice. Allow to stand for 5 minutes.
2 Put the egg yolks and sugar into a bowl and whisk until thick and creamy. Whisk in half of the orange juice concentrate. (The rest can be diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions, and served as a drink.)
3 Whisk in the liqueur and lemon juice.
4 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a small bowl and soak until spongy. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until the liquid is clear and the gelatine has dissolved. Allow to cool slightly.
5 Whisk the egg whites until they stand in soft peaks. Whip the cream until it holds soft peaks. Stir the gelatine into the orange mixture, then fold in the cream and egg whites using a large metal spoon.
6 Pour into a serving dish and chill for 2-4 hours until set.
7 Whip the cream and use to pipe rosettes around the edge of the mousse. Decorate with slices of orange and chopped nuts.

Devil's Food Cake

Devil's food cake

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz butter, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz self-raising flour, sifted
90ml / 6tbls cocoa powder, sifted
30ml / 2tbls ground almonds
125ml / 4fl oz milk
60ml / 4tbls golden syrup

FROSTING
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
50g / 2oz butter
90ml / 6tbls milk
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

SERVES 8-10

1 Line a 1.1L / 2pt straight-sided deep cake or soufflé dish with cling film or line the base with greaseproof paper.
2 Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, a little at a time, beating well.
3 Fold in the flour, cocoa and ground almonds using a large metal spoon. Add the milk and golden syrup and mix thoroughly.
4 Spoon the mixture into the prepared dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, turning every 1½ minutes. When cooked, the top of the cake will still look slightly wet. It will dry out while the cake stands for 10 minutes in the dish. Turn out on to a wire rack, remove the cling film or paper and leave to cool.
5 To make the frosting, break the chocolate into a bowl. Add the butter and milk and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until smooth.
6 Add the icing sugar and vanilla and mix well. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then beat until smooth, thick and glossy.
7 Split the cool cake in half horizontally. Use a quarter of the frosting to sandwich the two halves together, then use the rest to cover the top and sides of the cake. Swirl the frosting decoratively using a palette knife.

Brown bread ice cream

6 mins

Standing time: none

2 eggs plus 2 egg whites
425ml / ¾pt milk
175g / 6oz sugar
15ml / 1tbls dark rum
275ml / ½pt double cream
100g / 4oz brown breadcrumbs, toasted
crisp biscuits to serve

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the whole eggs, milk and sugar in a bowl and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring every 3 minutes, until smooth and slightly thickened. Cool.
2 Mix in the rum and cream. Pour into a large freezer container and freeze until almost firm.
3 Remove the half-frozen ice cream from the freezer and turn into a bowl. Whisk until smooth and free from large ice crystals.
4 Using clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks. Fold into the ice cream with the breadcrumbs, using a large spoon. Return to the container and freeze for 3-4 hours. Serve in chilled glasses with crisp biscuits.

Jamaican South Seas Bubble

Russian pudding

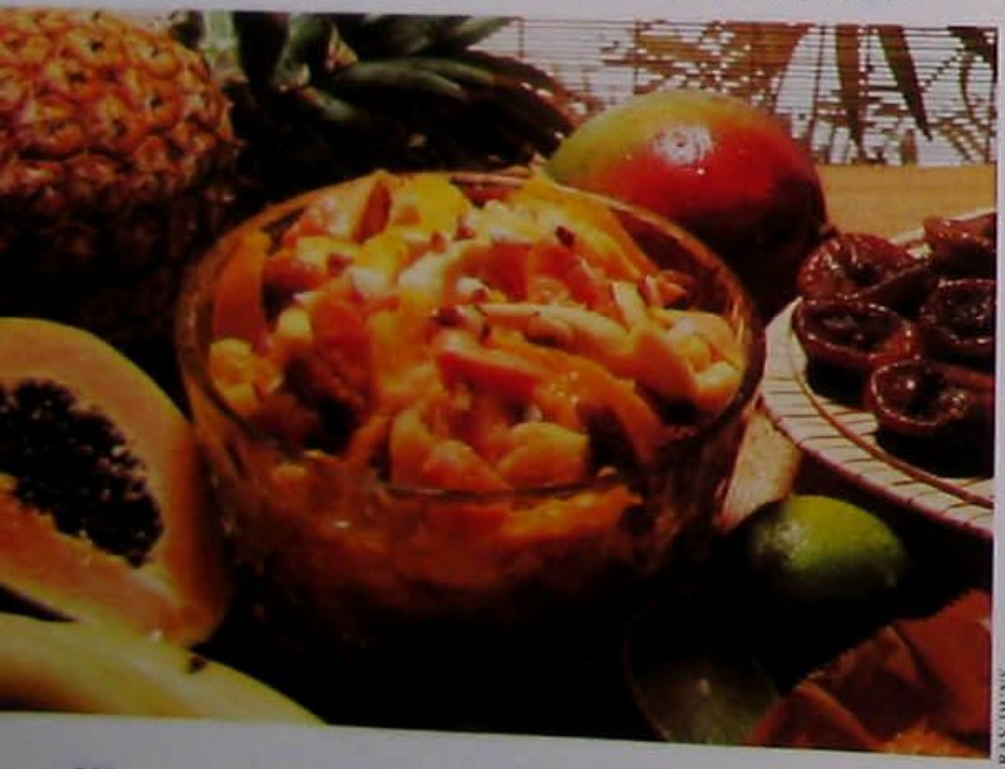
13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and cubed
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
25g / 1oz butter
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
60ml / 12tsp cornflour
575ml / 1pt milk
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1 egg, beaten
grated nutmeg to sprinkle

SERVES 4

1 Place the apples in a large pie dish with the soft brown sugar, butter, lemon zest and juice and mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Blend the cornflour with the milk, adding a little at a time and stirring well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring three times until smooth and thickened.
3 Stir in the sugar and egg and mix well. Pour this custard over the fruit mixture, then mix thoroughly. Sprinkle grated nutmeg to taste over the top.
4 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 6 minutes, turning the dish twice. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.



RAY DUNS

Jamaican South Seas bubble

6 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
45ml / 3tbls lime juice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice
1 small pineapple, peeled, cored and cubed
2 papaya, peeled, seeded and sliced
1 mango or guava, peeled, stoned and sliced
2 bananas, peeled and sliced
50g / 2oz dried figs, peeled and quartered
60ml / 4tbls dark rum or coconut liqueur
45ml / 3tbls shelled Brazil nuts, coarsely chopped
ice cream or soured cream to serve

SERVES 4

1 Put the butter into a large heatproof dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until half melted.
2 Add the sugar, lime juice and spice and mix thoroughly. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, covered, stirring once during cooking.
3 Add the pineapple, papaya, mango or guava, bananas and figs. Toss gently to coat in the spiced butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring gently once, until the fruit has softened a little, but still holds its shape firmly.
4 Add the rum or coconut liqueur and stir well to blend.
5 Cover again and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1 minute.
6 Sprinkle with the Brazil nuts and serve warm with ice cream or soured cream.

Microtips

Drained canned tropical fruits can be used; as they are softer than the fresh ones, reduce the microwaving time by 30-60 seconds before adding liqueur.

Swedish apple torte

18 mins

Standing time: none

25ml / 5tsp sugar
1.25ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
350g / 12oz plain flour
large pinch of salt
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, diced
100g / 4oz lard or shortening, diced
1 egg, beaten
45ml / 3tbls whipping cream
5 drops of yellow food colouring
385g / 13½oz can apple pie filling
125ml / 4fl oz whipping cream

SERVES 8

How to microwave Swedish apple torte

Mix *the sugar with the cinnamon. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Rub in the diced fats, using fingertips or a mixer, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.*

Combine *the egg, cream and food colouring. Stir into the crumb mixture and mix with a fork to make a firm but pliable dough. Knead on a lightly floured board until smooth.*

Cut *the dough into quarters. Roll out each on a lightly floured board or greaseproof paper and cut into a 25cm / 10in round using an inverted dish as a guide.*

Sprinkle *each circle with a quarter of the cinnamon sugar mixture. Using a plain 7.5cm / 3in cutter, cut a circle of dough from the centre of each of the pastry rounds. Halve and set aside to use later as decoration.*

Microwave *each ring on double absorbent paper at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes; turn every minute. Cool. Microwave reserved rounds on absorbent paper at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, turning twice.*

Place *one ring on a serving dish. Top with a third of the apple filling. Repeat twice, ending with a plain ring, then chill for 30 minutes. Top with whipped cream and pastry semi-circles. Store unfilled layers for 1-2 days.*

Lemon zabaglione

3 mins

Standing time: none

1 large egg
2 large egg yolks
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt Marsala, sweet sherry or sweet white wine
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
sponge finger biscuits or langues de chat, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Put the egg and egg yolks into a large bowl and whisk until smooth and creamy. Add the sugar and continue whisking until beginning to thicken.
2 Pour the Marsala, sherry or wine into a jug. Add the lemon zest and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until just boiling.
3 Pour the lemon liquid on to the egg mixture and whisk until slightly thickened. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 1½ minutes.
4 Whisk the mixture again until very thick and frothy — about 4-5 minutes.
5 Pour the zabaglione into warmed dessert glasses and serve at once with the sponge finger biscuits or langues de chat.

Plum duff

10 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

60ml / 4tbls currants
60ml / 4tbls raisins
60ml / 4tbls sultanas
30ml / 2tbls sweet sherry
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice
100g / 4oz shredded suet
100g / 4oz brown breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz dark brown sugar
1 egg, beaten
75ml / 5tbls milk
custard, to serve

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix currants, raisins, sultanas, sherry and orange juice in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Cool.
2 Sift flour, cinnamon and mixed spice. Stir in all the other ingredients and beat thoroughly.
3 Turn into a lightly greased 1.1L / 2pt bowl and level the top. Cover with pleated cling film to allow for rising and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes.
4 Stand for 5-10 minutes, then turn out onto a warmed dish. Serve with pouring custard.

French apricot tart

13 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz sugar
150ml / ¼pt water
700g / 1½lb apricots, halved and stoned
2 egg yolks
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
grated zest of 1 orange
25ml / 5tsp cornflour
20ml / 4tsp plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
1 egg white
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds, toasted

SERVES 6

1 Mix the sugar with the water in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes to dissolve the sugar. Mix in the apricots.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once, until apricots are just cooked.
3 Remove the apricots using a slotted spoon and set aside to cool.
4 Microwave the remaining syrup at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until thick and syrupy, then cool.
5 Whisk the egg yolks with half the caster sugar until thick. Add the orange zest, cornflour and flour, whisking thoroughly.
6 Pour the milk into a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Slowly pour the milk on to the egg mixture, stirring continuously. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2-2½ minutes, stirring three times, until smooth and thick. Set aside to cool.
7 Whisk the egg white until it stands in stiff peaks. Whisk in the remaining caster sugar until thick and glossy. Fold into the custard using a large metal spoon.
8 Spoon the custard mixture into the prepared pastry case, rounding it slightly in the centre. Arrange the apricots on the top, cut side down.
9 Brush or spoon the cooled syrup glaze over the top and scatter with the almonds. Chill lightly. Best eaten the same day.

Speedy chicken dishes

Chicken is a favourite standby — it's inexpensive, easy to prepare and versatile. These recipes use chicken in its many convenient forms and, with the help of the microwave, provide lots of quick dishes.

Chicken dishes cook perfectly in the microwave and can be as versatile as you wish to make them. For example; serve Chicken Broccoli Toasts for a light supper; Zippy Chicken and Vegetables for a substantial meal, or Chicken in Ginger Cream for a special occasion dish.

This recipe selection makes the most of chicken in its many forms — using up the leftovers from the Sunday roast; portions or smaller pieces like thighs, as well as storecupboard items such as canned pressed chicken.

Zippy Chicken and Vegetables

Cheesy-crumb chicken

24½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz cornflakes, finely crushed
75ml / 5tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls dried parsley
1 small garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
40g / 1½oz butter
1 egg, beaten
6 chicken pieces (total weight 900g / 2lb), skinned

SERVES 6

1 Combine the crushed cornflakes, cheese, parsley, garlic, and seasoning in a bowl.
2 Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-45 seconds until melted; stir in the beaten egg.
3 Dip the chicken pieces into the egg mixture and then coat evenly in the cornflake mixture.
4 Place in a large dish, bony sides down and thick pieces to the outside of the dish. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes.
5 Turn and rearrange chicken. Remove the paper and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 12 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with jacket potatoes.

Chicken enchiladas

16 mins

Standing time: none

6 taco shells

FILLING
275g / 10oz cooked chicken meat, cut into small cubes
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
50g / 2oz green olives, stoned and chopped
10ml / 2tsp dried parsley
pepper
pinch of garlic salt

SAUCE
1 onion, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
3 fresh green chillies, seeded and chopped
400g / 14oz can sieved Italian tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
pinch of sugar
pinch of garlic salt

TOPPING
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 6

1 Combine the filling ingredients in a bowl. Divide the mixture into six equal portions and fill each of the taco shells. Place in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.
2 Prepare the sauce: put the onion, green pepper and chillies in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in the remaining sauce ingredients and pour over the tacos.
3 Cover with a sheet of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes until heated through.
4 Sprinkle with the grated cheese; reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave, uncovered, for 3-5 minutes or until cheese melts.

Chicken enchiladas for two: use half quantity of all ingredients. Combine the onion, pepper and chilli in a small bowl; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Microwave filled tacos with sauce at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes until heated through. Spinkle with cheese, reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave, uncovered for 2-4 minutes until cheese melts.

Zippy chicken and vegetables

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Slimmer's take note: you can reduce the calorie content of this dish by skinning chicken portions.

30ml / 2tbls plain flour
22g / ¾oz packet French dressing mix
425g / 14oz can chicken broth
4 carrots, thinly sliced
4 chicken portions (weighing between 900g-1.4kg / 2-3lb)
225g / 8oz frozen peas

SERVES 4

1 Smoothly blend the flour, French dressing mix and chicken broth in a casserole. Stir in carrots and arrange chicken on top.
2 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes.
3 Remove chicken from dish and stir in peas. Add chicken, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Chicken Enchiladas

Chicken in ginger cream

28 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

4 boneless chicken breasts, skinned
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of mushroom soup
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream
60ml / 4tbls dry sherry
15ml / 1tbls chopped stem ginger
30ml / 2tbls chopped fresh parsley
cooked rice to serve
paprika to dust

SERVES 4

Microtips

This dish is cooked at 50% (Medium) because the soured cream could separate and curdle if cooked too quickly.

Cook's notes

Removing the skin from the chicken breasts allows the flesh to absorb more flavour. It also makes the finished dish more attractive.

How to microwave Chicken in ginger cream

Place *chicken breasts in a 20cm / 8in square dish, arranging them diagonally from corners to centre. Combine remaining ingredients except rice and paprika. Pour over chicken.*

Cover *with cling film. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes. Turn chicken over, re-cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 13 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes.*

Arrange *the chicken breasts over hot cooked rice on a serving dish. Stir sauce well and spoon a little over the chicken breasts. Dust with paprika. Serve the remaining sauce separately.*

Chicken broccoli toasts

18 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz frozen broccoli
45ml / 3tbls water
1 onion, chopped
50g / 2oz butter
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp made English mustard
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt milk
50g / 2oz Emmental cheese, grated
225g / 8oz cooked chicken meat, chopped
4 slices bread, toasted

SERVES 4

1 Place broccoli in a bowl, add water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes or until tender, stirring after half the time. Drain and chop coarsely.
2 Place onion and 25g / 1oz butter in a bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.
3 Stir in the flour, mustard and seasoning, then gradually blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes or until thickened, stirring once. Stir in the cheese and chicken.
4 Trim the crusts from the toast and crumble crusts into a bowl. Add the remaining 25g / 1oz butter, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring every minute.
5 Place slices of toast on a serving plate and cover each with a layer of broccoli, chicken and sauce; sprinkle buttered crumbs on top. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes until heated through. Serve at once.

Cook's notes

Make this recipe with cauliflower florets, if preferred. Cubes of cooked turkey can be used instead of chicken and, for economy, use grated Cheddar cheese rather than Emmental. This dish is best served immediately after cooking as it does not reheat successfully.

Chicken Broccoli Toasts

Chicken broccoli toast for one: use 50g / 2oz frozen broccoli, 22.5ml / 1½tbls water, 15ml / 1tbls chopped onion, 25g / 1oz butter, 10ml / 2tsp plain flour, 1.5ml / ¼tsp made mustard, salt and pepper, 90ml / 6tbls milk, 30ml / 2tbls grated cheese, 50g / 2oz cooked, cubed chicken and 1 slice toast. Prepare as directed in method but microwave broccoli at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes; onion and butter for 1½-2½ minutes; sauce for 1-1½ minutes and the butter and breadcrumbs for 30 seconds to 1½ minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave the assembled Chicken and Broccoli Toast for 2-3 minutes.

Speedy chicken stew

30 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
1 large onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
½ greeen pepper, seeded and chopped
4 chicken portions (weighing between 900g-1.4kg / 2-3lb)
90ml / 6tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt boiling water
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
pinch of dried rosemary
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled

SERVES 4

1 Put the butter and vegetables in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until softened, stirring once.
2 Coat chicken portions in the flour. Add chicken to casserole and sprinkle over any remaining flour. Gradually stir in the water, parsley, seasoning, dried rosemary and stock cube.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25 minutes or until chicken is tender. Rearrange chicken portions halfway through cooking. Skim fat from surface of casserole before serving, if necessary. Serve hot with granary bread.

Speedy Chicken Stew

Chestnut chicken layer

18 mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz frozen mixed vegetables
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of chicken soup
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
½ × 225g / 8oz can water chestnuts, chopped
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp made English mustard
a pinch of curry powder
275g / 10oz cooked chicken
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls seasoned breadcrumbs

SERVES 4-6

1 Pierce the bag of frozen vegetables and place the bag in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Drain well.
2 In a bowl, combine the soup, mayonnaise, water chestnuts, lemon juice, mustard and curry powder. Cube the chicken.
3 In a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole, arrange in layers half the vegetables, chicken, soup mixture and cheese. Repeat the layers and finish with cheese.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 10-15 minutes or until well heated through. Rotate dish ¼ turn halfway through. Top with breadcrumbs; serve hot.

Chestnut chicken layer for one: use half the quantity of all the ingredients given and prepare as above. Place in a 1.1L / 2pt dish and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes. Rotate dish one ¼ turn.

Chestnut Chicken Layer

Moroccan meal for 4

Treat your friends to a taste of Morocco — or call back memories of a holiday with this typical menu. Planning with the microwave cuts down on long cooking times and allows you to serve the dishes piping hot.

Most Moroccan food is, by nature, well spiced and generously flavoured with herbs. This makes it an excellent candidate for microwave cooking — the spices give the food an appetizing colour and their flavours are able to permeate the food during standing time.

Prawns make a delicious starter when marinated and spiced — the same marinade can be used for large pieces of cooked firm-fleshed fish. Reheat as for the prawns. Alternatively, for a less expensive first course, serve Aubergine Appetizer (see recipe page 605) with warmed pitta bread.

Couscous is a staple food in North African countries. It is traditionally served with meat and vegetable dishes, just as rice might be in the Far East, or potatoes in Europe. Normally couscous needs to be soaked in water, then par-boiled and finally steamed for 1½ hours, either over boiling water or with the meat dish with which it is to be eaten. The pre-cooked variety now widely available needs only short soaking before it is heated through in the microwave. Vary the flavour of the couscous by adding different types of stock.

Almonds are a feature of Moroccan cooking. They are served with the chilled pears, and can also be used as an alternative to the pine nuts on the salad.

Serve the dessert with thick natural yoghurt as a traditional accompaniment, or with cream.

Countdown

Early in the day
Prepare and microwave the Pears in Almond Syrup. Allow to cool, then cover and chill.

Two hours before the meal
Prepare the salad and leave in the refrigerator. Prepare and microwave the Chakchouka and leave covered. Marinate the half-peeled prawns, turning them every 15 minutes to enable them to absorb the maximum flavour.

One hour before serving
Microwave the Lamb Tajine while the couscous is soaking. When the tajine is removed from the cooker, leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Heat the couscous and leave to stand, covered.

Just before serving
Heat the prawns through, according to the recipe, and serve.

Microwave the Lamb Tajine at 50% (Medium), without the eggs, for 8 minutes to heat through.

Heat the Chakchouka at 100% (High) for 5 minutes while clearing the dishes from the first course. The couscous holds heat well and will probably need no reheating. Serve the tajine, couscous, chakchouka and salad together.

MENU

Arabian Prawns
Spiced marinated prawns

Lamb Tajine
Traditionally spiced meat casserole

Couscous
Grain cooked Moroccan-style

Chakchouka
Well-flavoured vegetable casserole

Date and Orange Salad
A traditional combination of refreshing flavours

Pears in Almond Syrup
Chilled cooked pears in syrup

SERVES 4

Arabian prawns

2 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls olive or vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp paprika
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
large pinch of cayenne pepper
45ml / 3tbls chopped coriander leaves or parsley
450g / 1lb cooked prawns, unshelled
lemon wedges, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the oil, garlic, paprika, cumin, ginger, cayenne pepper and coriander leaves or parsley.

2 Remove the heads from the prawns, along with most of the shells (see Preparing prawns page 560).

3 Marinate the prawns in the spiced mixture for 1 hour, turning them every 15 minutes. Drain and arrange in a large dish.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, uncovered, until heated through. Serve hot, with lemon wedges.

Microtips

Take care to microwave the prawns until they are just hot — too much heating will make them tough and overcooked.

Also take care with the chakchouka as the beans become hard if overcooked by just a few seconds.

Preparing prawns

First remove the head of the prawn, leaving only firm flesh in the shell. Starting at the head end, peel away the legs and shell. Turn and work down the other side, leaving the tail.

Couscous

15 mins

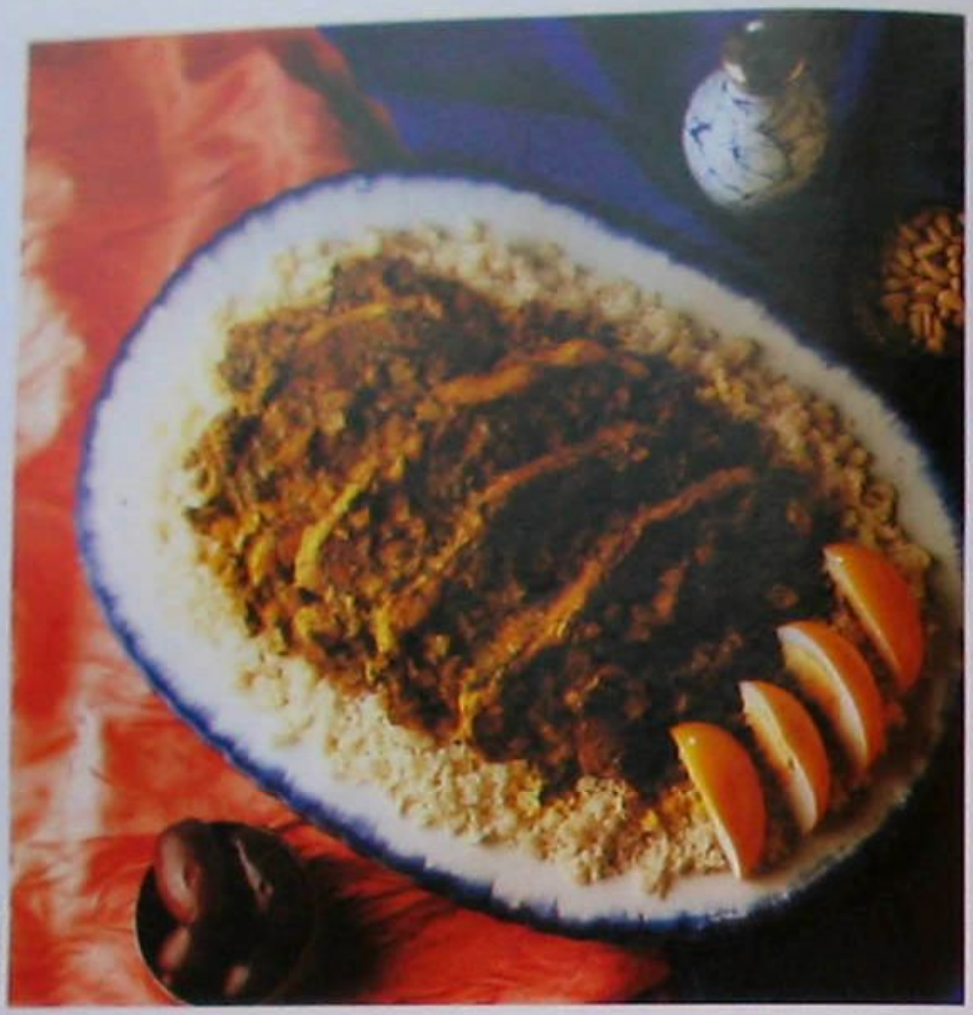
Standing time: none

350g / 12oz pre-cooked couscous*
250ml / 9fl oz warm water
50g / 2oz butter
200ml / 7fl oz stock
salt to taste

SERVES 4

1 Place the couscous in a bowl and pour over the warm water. Leave to soak for 10 minutes, stirring once or twice.
2 When couscous has absorbed liquid, stir in butter and stock.
3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes, stirring every 3-4 minutes to separate the grains. Serve hot with the tajine.

**In Australia and New Zealand, use regular, packaged couscous.*



Couscous

Microtips

Couscous will hold its heat for up to 15 minutes provided it is covered when set aside. If waiting for longer, microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes to reheat.

Lamb tajine

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls olive oil
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
10ml / 2tsp turmeric
2 onions, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls finely chopped parsley
4 thick lamb leg chops (total weight 700-900g / 1½-2lb)
275ml / ½pt lamb stock
4 hard-boiled eggs, shelled
275ml / ½pt hot water

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the oil, salt and pepper, cinnamon, half the turmeric, the onion and parsley in a large shallow dish.
2 Pat the chops dry, then add to the dish and turn until well coated. Stand for 15 minutes.
3 Add stock. Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 20 minutes, until tender, turning once. Stand for 5 minutes.
4 Meanwhile prepare the eggs: mix the remaining turmeric with the water, add the shelled eggs and leave to colour for 3 minutes. Quarter the eggs and use to garnish the tajine.

Cook's notes

Ask your butcher to cut the chops thickly, or they may curl during cooking.

To reduce curling at the edges, snip into the fat and skin around the chops.

Moroccan chakchouka

15 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz frozen broad beans
450g / 1lb tomatoes, skinned and roughly chopped
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp paprika
large pinch of cayenne pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the oil, onion, garlic and green pepper in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole.
2 Cover with a lid or with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Stir in the broad beans, tomato, salt, pepper, paprika and cayenne pepper.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10 minutes, stirring once, and again just before serving. Check the seasoning and adjust to taste.

Cook's notes

Different vegetables can be added, such as cauliflower or peas. Eggs or spicy sausage will make it into a main dish.

Orange and date salad

4 oranges
6-8 fresh dates, stoned and chopped
30ml / 2tbls pine nuts
juice of 1 lemon
2.5ml / ½tsp icing sugar

SERVES 4

1 Peel the oranges, removing all the pith. Cut the fruit into slices crossways.
2 Arrange the dates, pine nuts and orange slices in a bowl.
3 Mix the lemon juice with just enough icing sugar to remove the sour taste, but not so much that the flavour is sweet.
4 Pour the lemon juice over the salad. Chill well before serving.

Pears in almond syrup

17 mins

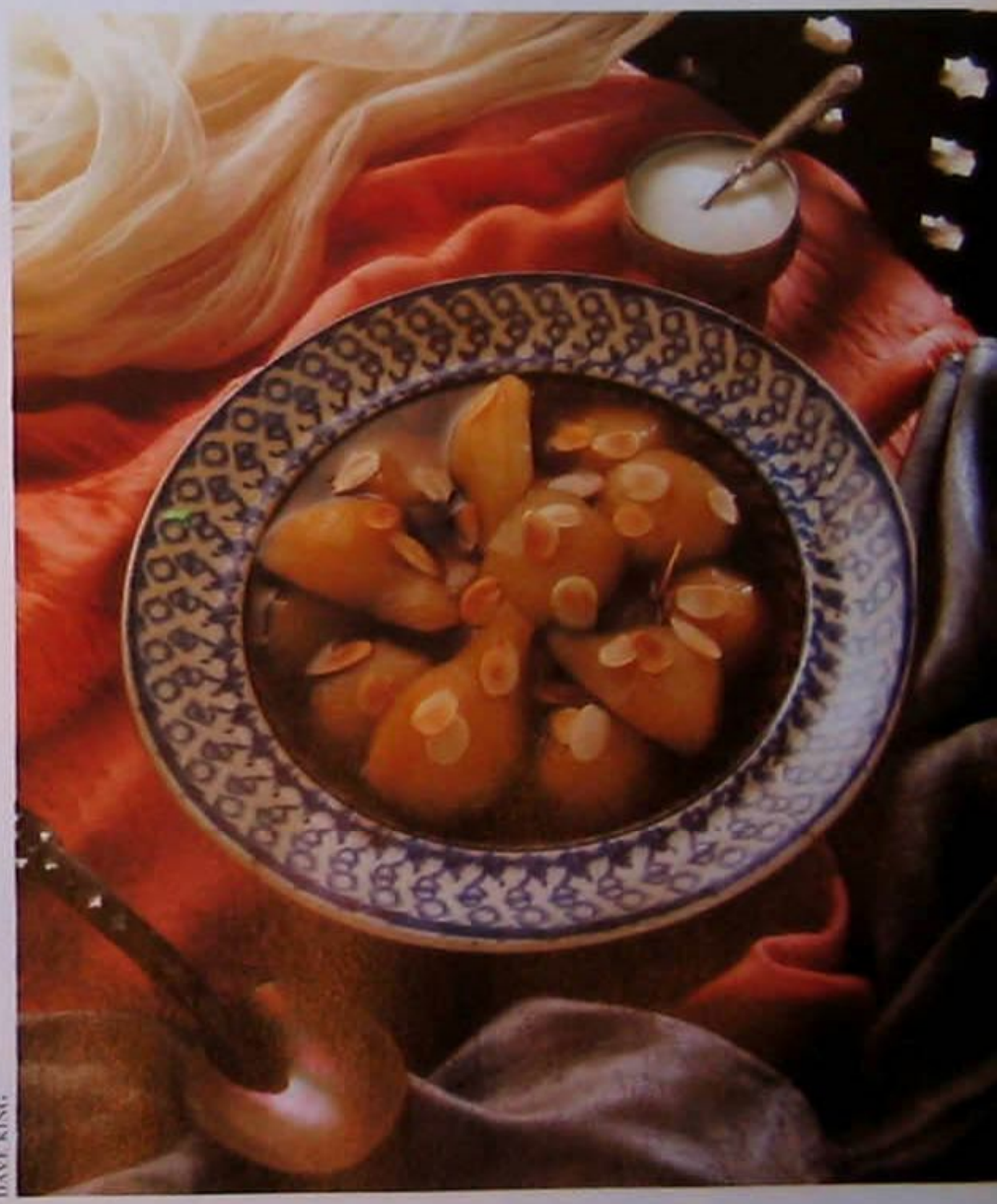
Standing time: none

juice of 1 lemon
275ml / ½pt water
225g / 8oz soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp almond flavouring
4 large dessert pears
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds, toasted
thick natural yoghurt, to serve

SERVES 4

1 To make the syrup, mix the lemon juice, water and sugar in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, boiling until thickened and syrupy. Open the cooker door if the syrup starts to darken in colour, and continue microwaving after a minute.
2 Stir almond flavouring to taste into the syrup.
3 Peel, quarter and core the pears. Place the pears in a shallow dish, quite close together.
4 Add the syrup, then microwave uncovered at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-15 minutes, depending on the ripeness and size of the pears. Cool and chill.
5 Serve the pears with yoghurt and with the almonds sprinkled on the top.

Pears in Almond Syrup



DAVE KING

Aubergines

Hot or cold, starter or main course, stuffed, on their own or in combination with other vegetables, aubergines are ever versatile — and speedy to cook in the microwave.

The microwave makes light work of cooking aubergines, in much the same way as it does of potatoes. It takes less than 10 minutes to cook a whole aubergine. Furthermore, the flesh stays an appetizing pale apple green and does not discolour to the muddy, greyish brown colour associated with conventional aubergine bakes and dips.

Aubergines are available all year round. They are picked while still immature and firm. When buying, select the smaller, firmer aubergines, which are heavy for their size. Look for green caps and smooth, shiny skins free of brown

spots, scars or cuts. Avoid dull, wrinkled, pitted or even slightly soft aubergines.

Refrigerate aubergines, unwrapped, in the crisper and use as soon as possible as they soften and become bitter with age. Allow to come to room temperature before cooking in the microwave.

Because of the speedy microwave cooking times, aubergine dishes can be made very fast and without fuss. For example, the flesh of a baked aubergine can be scooped out and puréed for a dip (see page 605). Slices of aubergine are ideal for Aubergine Parmesan (see page 605), or Cottage Aubergine (see page 606), to name a few.

Moussaka

32¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb aubergines
50ml / 2fl oz boiling water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
350g / 12oz cold cooked lamb, finely chopped or minced
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
227g / 8oz can tomatoes
10ml / 2tsp tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275g / ½pt milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz crisps, crushed, or dried breadcrumbs (optional)

SERVES 5-6

1 Cut the aubergines into 6mm / ¼in slices and place in a large bowl with the water. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until fork tender. Stir twice during cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then drain.
2 Place the butter or margarine and onion in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until onion is tender.
3 Add the garlic, lamb, flour, tomatoes with their juice, tomato purée, and salt and pepper to the onion. Stir well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, until hot, stirring twice.
4 Line the base and sides of a shallow, rectangular, 1.4L / 2½pt dish with the aubergine slices. Spoon in the meat mixture, layering it with any remaining aubergine slices.
5 To make the sauce, melt the butter, covered, in a bowl for 15-30 seconds at 100% (High). Stir in the flour, then gradually blend in the milk. Microwave for 4-6 minutes until thick, whisking every minute. Add three-quarters of the cheese and stir until melted. Whisk in the beaten egg and salt and pepper to taste.
6 Pour the sauce evenly over the hot meat mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, until the sauce has set; turn the dish every 4 minutes.
7 To give the dish a golden-brown topping, sprinkle over the reserved cheese and brown under a conventional grill, or scatter with crushed crisps or breadcrumbs. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Moussaka

Stuffed aubergines

13 mins

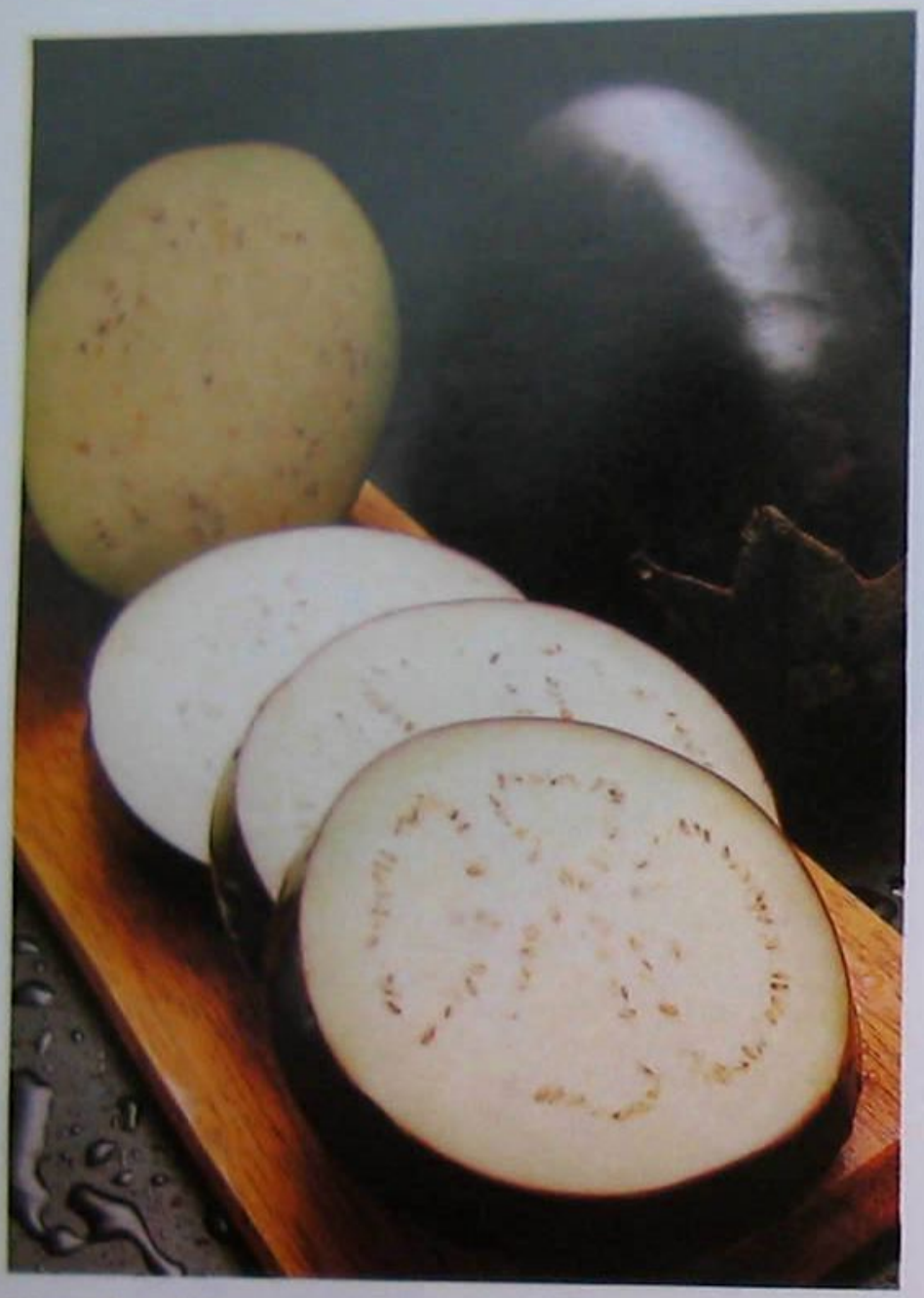
Standing time: 3-4 mins

2 aubergines, each weighing 225g / 8oz
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 slice of bread, diced
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper
198g / 7oz can tuna, drained
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
50g / 2oz cucumber, finely diced
25g / 1oz Mozzarella or Edam cheese, grated
paprika for dusting

SERVES 2-4

1 Cut the aubergines in half lengthways. Carefully scoop out the flesh, leaving a 6mm / ¼in shell; chop the flesh coarsely. Turn shells upside down to drain and sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent browning; set aside.
2 Place the flesh in a large bowl with the prepared vegetables, bread, oil, garlic, thyme and seasoning. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once or twice.
3 Flake the tuna into chunks and stir into the vegetable stuffing with the lemon juice and cucumber. Check the seasoning, then spoon into the aubergine shells.
4 Arrange the stuffed aubergines in a shallow dish, cover loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 5-6 minutes. Turn the shells in the dish and sprinkle with cheese and paprika. Microwave, uncovered, for a further 1-3 minutes until piping hot. Let stand for 3-4 minutes. Serve two halves as a main course and one for a starter for four.

Stuffed Aubergines



Aubergine casserole

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp sugar
10ml / 2tsp tomato purée or paste
45ml / 3tbls wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls water
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
2 × 225g / 8oz aubergines
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
3-4 tomatoes, sliced
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion and oil in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until the onion is tender. Mix in the garlic, sugar, tomato purée, vinegar, water, seasoning and paprika.

2 Cut the aubergines in half lengthways, then into 12mm / ½in slices. Alternate layers of aubergine, mushroom and tomato in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Add tomato purée and paprika mixture.

3 Cover casserole with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stir, then microwave for 4-8 minutes, stirring once.

4 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes, and top with yoghurt.

How to microwave aubergine cubes

Wash *450g / 1lb aubergine only just before cooking as the cut flesh darkens on standing. Cut away the green stalk and cap, then chop the unpeeled aubergine into 2cm / ¾in cubes.*

Place *the cubes in a casserole with 25g / 1oz butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes until skin and flesh are nearly tender. Stir every 3 minutes. Stand 4 minutes.*

Season *the aubergine with salt and pepper, adding any of the following to taste: grated Parmesan cheese, snipped chives, chopped herbs, or crushed garlic, or sprinkle with olive oil.*

Aubergine appetizer

4 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

This dish makes a first-class appetizer. Serve as a starter, or as a pre-dinner snack with drinks. Use crisps, corn chips, toast or chopped vegetables for dipping.

2 × 225g / 8oz aubergines
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed
salt and pepper
½ onion, grated (optional)
30-45ml / 2-3tbls lemon juice

TO SERVE
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
black olives

SERVES 2-4

1 Wash, dry and microwave the aubergines as directed in the steps, right.
2 Scoop out the flesh with a spoon and mash with a fork until quite smooth. Gradually blend in the remaining oil to make a creamy mixture. Mix in the parsley, garlic, salt and pepper, onion and lemon juice to taste. Cover and refrigerate until required.
3 Turn the aubergine mixture into individual serving dishes or a single serving bowl. Scatter with chopped parsley and olives, if liked.

VARIATION
Eastern appetizer: for a more tangy oriental flavour, add 30ml / 2tbls natural yoghurt, 5ml / 1tsp ground cumin and 1 chopped and seeded green chilli. Blend into the mashed aubergine.

Cook's notes

Older aubergines can be bitter. To reduce this, place the cut vegetable in a colander, sprinkle with 10-15ml / 2-3tsp salt, weight down and leave to drain for 20-30 minutes. Rinse in cold water and pat dry with absorbent paper before using.

How to microwave whole aubergines

RAY HUNS

Rinse *and dry two aubergines, each weighing 225g / 8oz. Peel off the stalk. Brush the surface with olive or vegetable oil, then prick with a fork.*

Place *on absorbent paper in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until slightly softened, turning once. Stand for 4 minutes.*

Aubergine Parmesan

20 mins

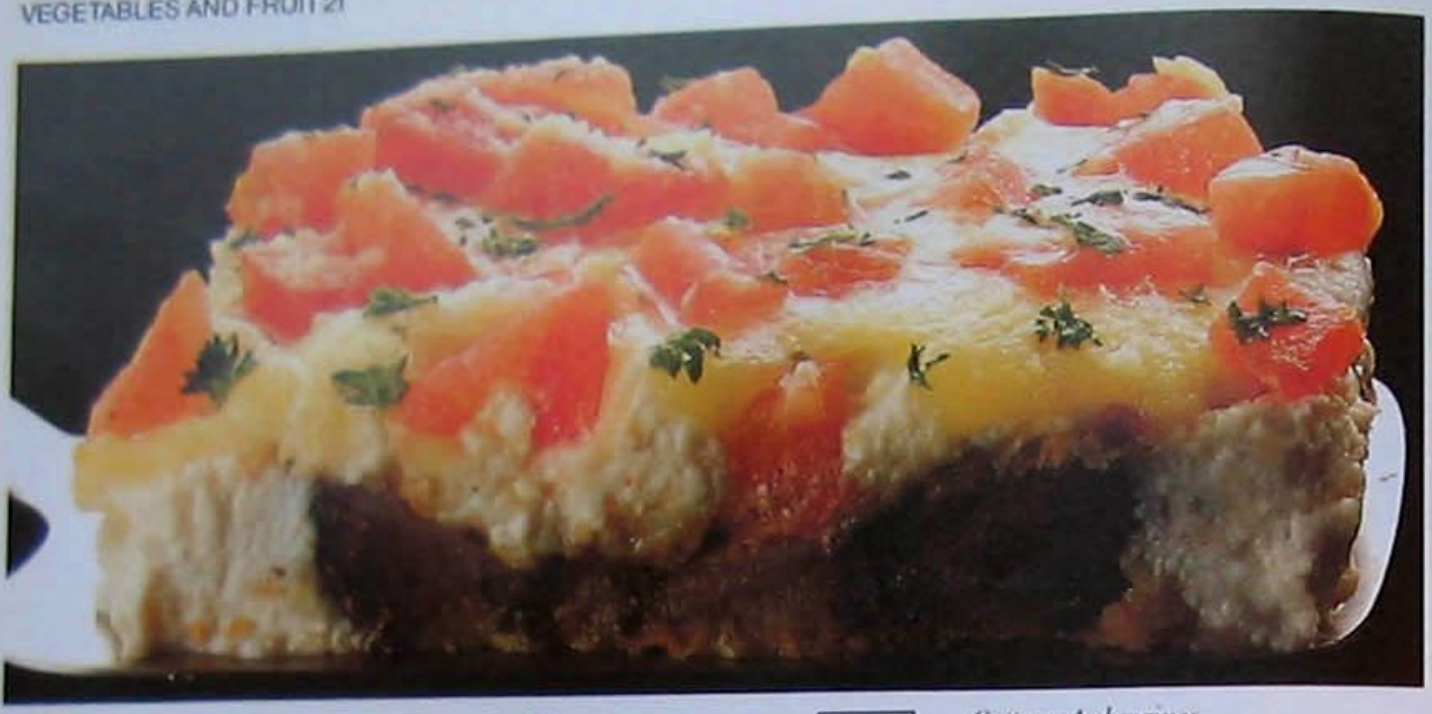
Standing time: none

1 onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
salt and pepper
400g / 15oz can tomatoes
450g / 1lb aubergines
1 egg, beaten with 15ml / 1tbls milk
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion and butter in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until tender. Mix in the flour, tomato purée, sugar and seasonings, then mash in the tomatoes with their juice.
2 Cover the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir, then microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, stirring once or twice, until thickened.
3 Meanwhile, cut the aubergines into 2cm / ¾in slices. Dip the slices into the egg mixture, then into the breadcrumbs to coat.
4 Arrange the slices in a single layer, or slightly overlapping, in a shallow dish. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-15 minutes, rotating every 5 minutes.
5 Scatter Cheddar cheese over the aubergines, then coat with the tomato sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until the cheese has melted. Serve piping hot.

Aubergine Parmesan



Cottage Aubergines

Breaded aubergine slices

16¼ mins

Standing time: none

2 × 225g / 8oz aubergines
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
45ml / 3tbls bran or wheatgerm
salt and pepper
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 egg, beaten

MAKES 14-16 SLICES

1 Peel the aubergines and cut into 12mm / ½in slices.
2 Mix together the breadcrumbs, bran and seasoning. Melt the butter in a bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Mix in the egg. Dip the aubergine slices in the egg mixture, then coat with the crumbs and bran.
3 Arrange half the coated slices in a single layer around the edge of a large, flat dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-11 minutes, or until just fork tender. Rotate the dish twice during cooking. Transfer the slices to a wire rack to cool. Repeat the process with the remaining slices.
4 Place the slices in a single layer on a greaseproof paper-lined tray. Open freeze until solid, then pack in a rigid container and freeze for up to two months.
5 Fry conventionally from frozen, or use in microwave dishes (see Cottage Aubergine, right).

Cottage aubergines

10 mins

Standing time: none

This dish makes a stunning starter or is an excellent accompaniment to roast chicken or lamb.

8 frozen Breaded Aubergine Slices (see left)
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
15ml / 1tbls grated onion
15ml / 1tbls fresh white breadcrumbs
salt
30ml / 2tbls milk
50g / 2oz Mozzarella or white Cheshire cheese, grated
1 tomato, peeled and chopped
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
chopped parsley to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the frozen aubergine slices in a single layer in a 20cm / 8in flan dish. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until thawed.
2 Mix the cottage cheese with the onion, breadcrumbs, salt to taste and milk. Spoon over the aubergine slices. Sprinkle with the Mozzarella or Cheshire cheese.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes until the cheese melts and aubergine is piping hot; rotate the dish once or twice.
4 Sprinkle the chopped tomato and Parmesan over the melted cheese, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes to heat the tomato. Sprinkle with parsley before serving, if liked.
5 Cut into wedges and serve hot on buttered toast, or cold on sliced bread for an unusual supper dish.

VARIATION
For a richer flavour, replace half the cottage cheese with 150ml / ¼pt soured cream and snipped chives. Continue as directed.

Microtips

The dish is cooked at 50% (Medium) to avoid toughening the cheese. However, it can be heated through at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes if in a hurry.

Cook's notes

If the Breaded Aubergine Slices are to be eaten as a vegetable accompaniment after freezing, salt and drain the slices as directed in Cooks's notes on page 605. This will reduce any bitterness.

Fresh mince

As well as being one of our most useful convenience foods, mince also lends itself to all sorts of tasty and unusual dishes — from a substantial Dutch Omelette to spicy Middle Eastern Meatballs.

Mince cooks quickly and remarkably well in the microwave. The loose texture of the meat means the microwaves penetrate easily, so that it takes little time to cook yet still retains its flavour. Saving time in cooking means extra time for more adventurous recipes. Try enclosing mince in cabbage leaves, after softening the leaves in the microwave, then cook these little parcels in a tasty piquant sauce.

Beef and lamb mince cook equally well by microwave. Lamb mince is particularly suitable for dishes with a Middle Eastern flavour — where lamb is the principal meat. Season the meat with mint, cinnamon and cumin for Middle Eastern Meatballs.

When casseroling mince, microwave at 100% (High), stirring and breaking up the meat once or twice during cooking. Once cooked, mince should have lost its pinky colour and be an even, pale brown.

Taco Salad

Taco salad

14½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb minced beef
1 onion, chopped
432g / 15.2oz can red kidney beans, drained
125ml / 4fl oz water
25-40g / 1-1½oz taco seasoning
1 small lettuce, shredded
2 tomatoes, cut into chunks
½ green pepper, chopped
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
50g / 2oz Red Leicester, grated
small packet corn chips, broken

SERVES 4

Meatballs with tangy sauce

13½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb minced beef
1 egg, beaten
1 carrot, grated
salt and pepper

SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls oil
½ onion, chopped
4 tomatoes, skinned, chopped
½ green pepper, in strips
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
salt and pepper

How to microwave Taco salad

Crumble *meat into a casserole. Add onion and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-6½ minutes. Stir once. Add beans, water and seasoning. Microwave, at 50% (Medium) for 10-13 minutes, stirring twice.*

5ml / 1tsp cornflour blended with 30ml / 2tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Microwave oil and onion in a bowl at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until onion is tender.
2 Add remaining sauce ingredients. Microwave covered at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Stir twice.
3 Combine beef, egg, carrot and seasoning and form into 12 meatballs. Arrange on roasting rack, cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes. Cover, stand for 2-3 minutes. Heat sauce at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Serve together.

Meatballs with Tangy Sauce

Combine *lettuce, tomatoes and green pepper in a salad bowl. Spoon the mince and kidney bean mixture over salad and top with the grated Cheddar and Red Leicester cheese and corn chips. Serve at once.*

Cook's notes

Taco seasoning, a blend of various Mexican herbs and spices, is available from most supermarkets. It is normally sold in approximately 40g / 1½oz packets, which the makers recommend to use with 450g / 1lb minced beef. However, if you prefer food less spicy, cut this down a little. Alternatively, make taco seasoning by mixing together 2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder, 5ml / 1tsp cumin, 5ml / 1tsp paprika, 5ml / 1tsp garlic powder 5ml / 1tsp oregano, salt and pepper. If wished, make up a quantity and store in an airtight container.

Cabbage rolls

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 large white cabbage leaves
450g / 1lb minced beef
1 onion, chopped
60g / 2½oz long-grain rice, cooked
1 egg
pinch of salt

SAUCE
400g / 14oz can sieved Italian tomatoes
10ml / 2tsp soft brown sugar
good pinch of dried basil

SERVES 4

Microtips

Use the microwave to help you remove whole cabbage leaves. First break off any broken or damaged leaves and trim base. Then microwave the whole cabbage at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes or until eight outer leaves can be removed easily. Remove each outer leaf from the cabbage as soon as it is soft enough. Refrigerate the remaining cabbage for further use.

How to microwave Cabbage rolls

Cut *out hard centre rib from each cabbage leaf. Place leaves in a shallow dish, cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the leaves are pliable.*

Combine *sauce ingredients and set aside. Then combine mince, onion, cooked rice, egg and salt and shape into 8 small loaves. Overlap cut edges of cabbage leaves and place a meat 'loaf' at base of each leaf. Roll up.*

Place *rolls, seam-side down around the edge of shallow dish. Add sauce, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Baste with sauce, turn dish and cook for 12 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Beef mince Stroganoff

12½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
3 spring onions, trimmed and roughly chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Crumble mince into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until meat loses pink colour, stirring once.
2 Add mushrooms, spring onions, tomato purée, mustard and seasoning, stir and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.
3 Add soured cream and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes until hot, stirring once.

Beef bean pot

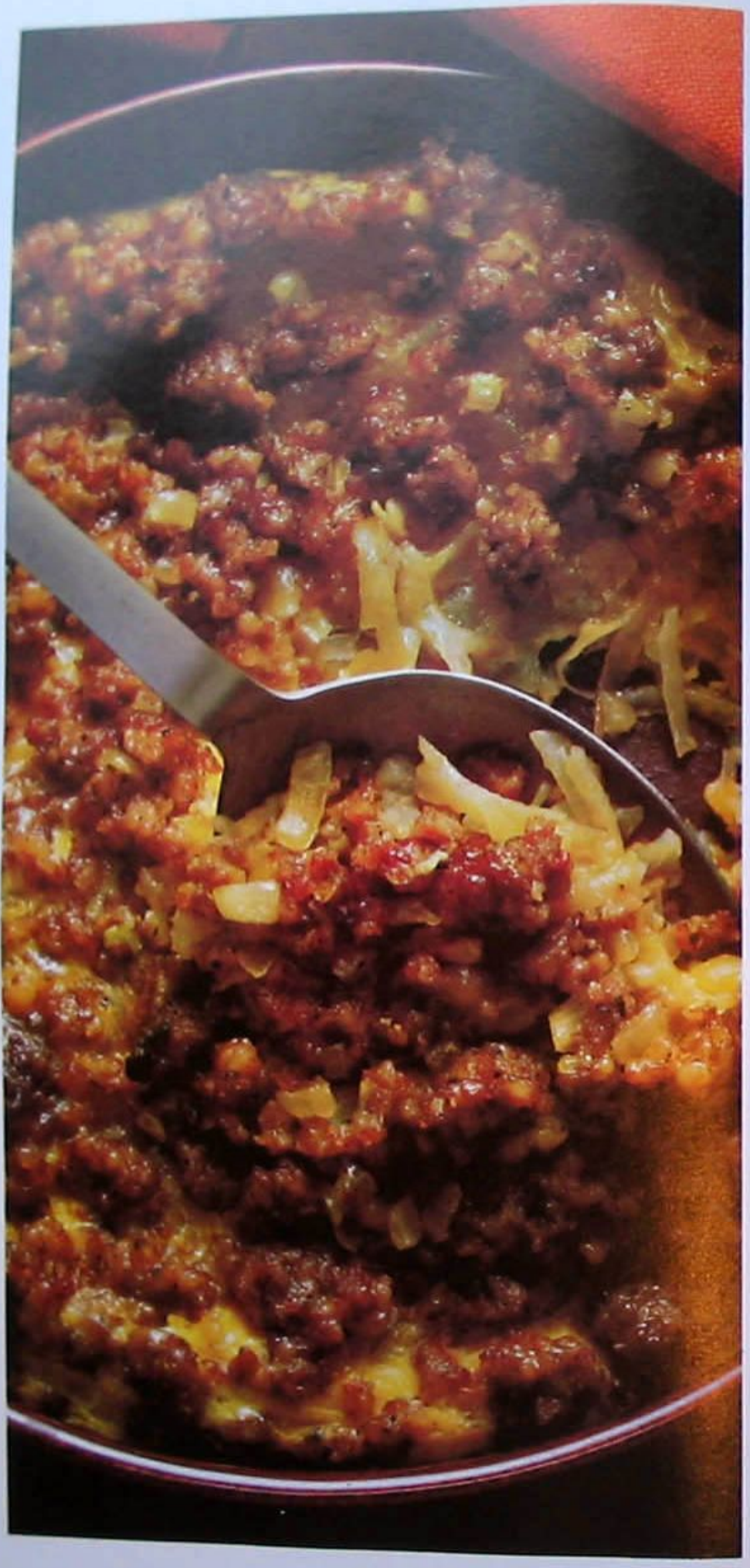
15½ mins

Standing time: none

4 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, chopped
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 apple, peeled and diced
2 × 450g / 1lb cans baked beans with pork sausage
15ml / 1tbls black treacle
5ml / 1tsp Hoisin barbecue sauce

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon in large casserole. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-6½ minutes or until crisp. Add minced beef, onion and apple and mix well.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once.
3 Add remaining ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes until hot, stirring once. Serve at once.



Dutch Omelette

Dutch omelette

13½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

350g / 12oz pork sausagemeat
1 small onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
25g / 1oz butter
350g / 12oz potatoes, grated
5 eggs
50ml / 2fl oz milk
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika

SERVES 4

Stuffed peppers

28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

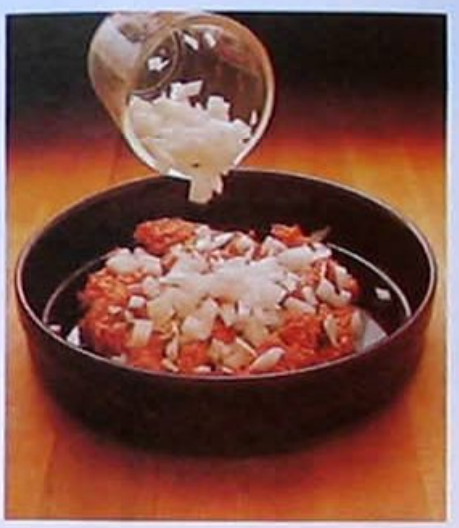
4 large green peppers

STUFFING
350g / 12oz lean minced lamb
400g / 14oz can whole tomatoes
100g / 4oz easy-cook rice
100g / 4oz can sweetcorn
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Cut off tops of green peppers, remove core and seeds and cut away a little of the base so they stand upright.
2 Mix stuffing ingredients, spoon into peppers and arrange in a large square baking dish. Replace tops.
3 Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 28-35 minutes, or until stuffing is set, rearranging two or three times. Stand for 5 minutes.

How to microwave Dutch omelette



Place *sausagemeat and onion in a round casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice.*

Stir *in soy sauce. Drain the meat mixture on absorbent paper. Discard any fat from dish and dot base of dish with the butter.*

Add *potatoes to casserole. Cover with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until tender, stirring once.*

Combine *remaining ingredients and add to dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir; spoon on sausagemeat.*

Reduce *to 50% (Medium) and cook for 1 minute. Lift edges of omelette carefully with a spatula so uncooked egg spreads evenly.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for a further 5-6 minutes until eggs are just set. Stand, covered with foil, for 3 minutes.*

Middle Eastern meatballs

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

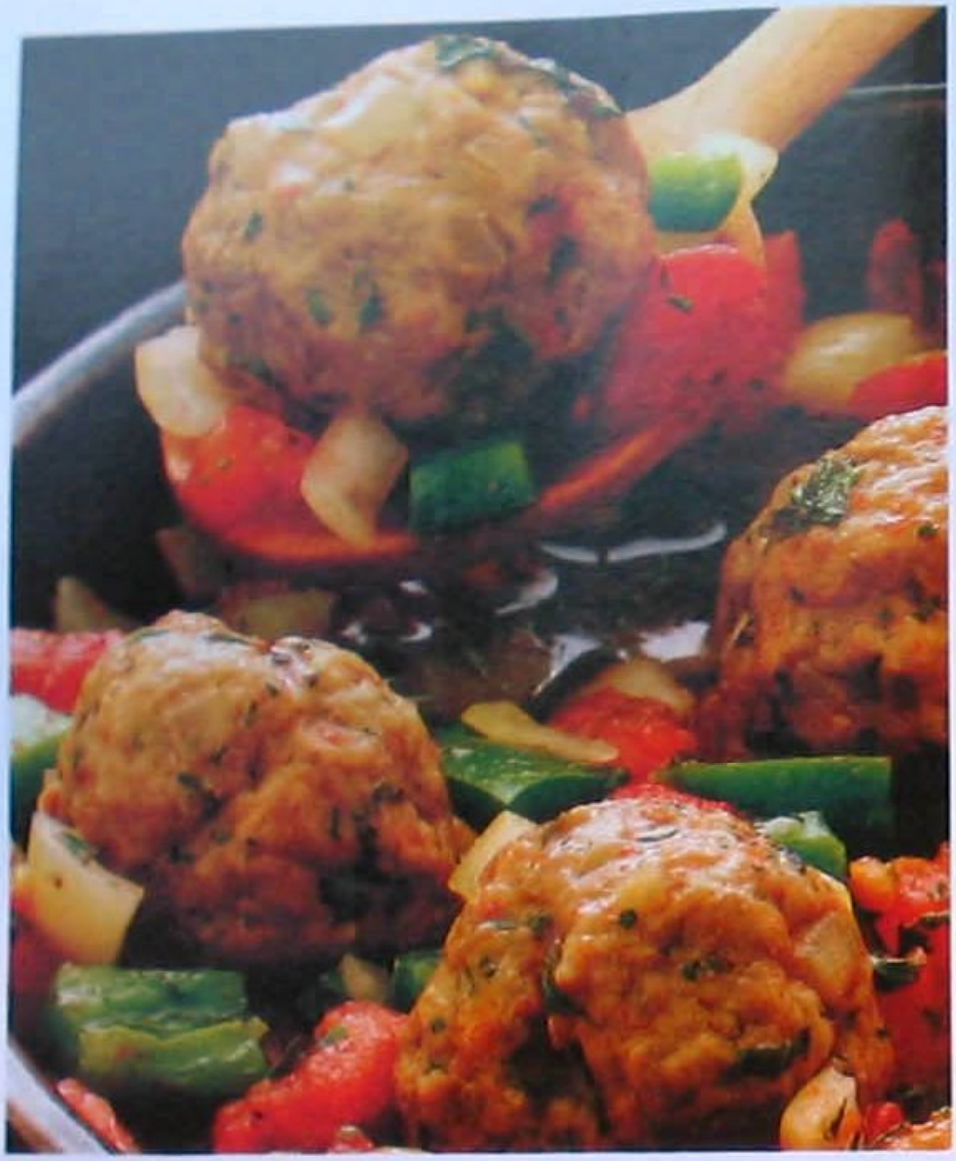
450g / 1lb lean minced lamb
1 small onion, finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped fresh mint or 1.5ml / ¼tsp dried
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
pinch of ground cinnamon
pinch of ground cumin
salt and pepper

SAUCE
4 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
10ml / 2tsp olive oil
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt
garlic powder (optional)

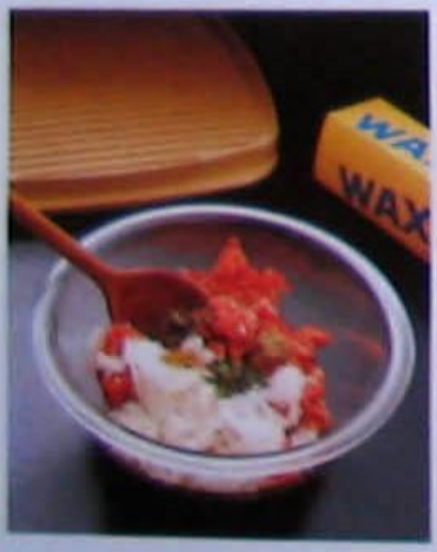
SERVES 4

Microtips

Middle Eastern Meatballs or beef meatballs can be brushed with 15ml / 1tbls soy or Worcestershire sauce before cooking to give an attractive brown colour.

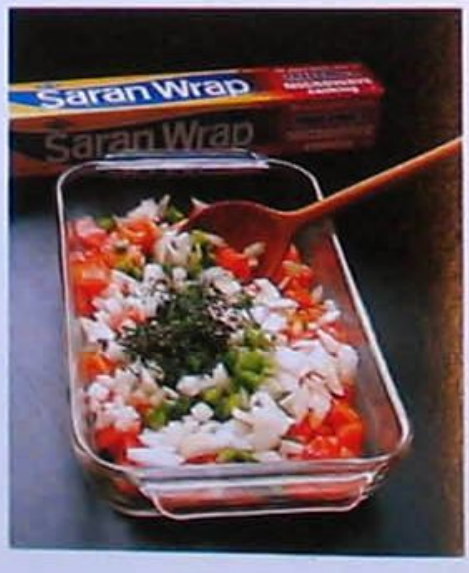


How to microwave Middle Eastern meatballs



Mix *together minced lamb, onion, herbs and spices. Season. Form into 12 meatballs. Place the meatballs on a roasting rack and cover with greaseproof paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Rearrange meatballs and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.*



Mix *sauce ingredients in dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes. Add meatballs, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.*

Savoury sauces 1

With the microwave cooker, sauce-making has never been so easy. If making Brown sauce has always seemed like too much trouble and Béarnaise sauce too difficult, branch out now and discover a recipe for success.

For easy preparation and perfect results when making sauces, choose your microwave cooker every time. Flour or cornflour thickened sauces are lump free and need less constant attention during cooking. Cream sauces and egg-enriched sauces are less likely to separate or curdle.

A well made sauce can transform a dish using everyday ingredients into something special. Many of the sauces here can be made in 10 minutes or less. This means you can cook the sauce while the food it is to accompany is standing. If you want to get ahead, make the sauce in advance and lay cling film on the surface to stop a skin forming. Reheat sauce in the microwave just before serving.

A sauce does not have to be fancy, or complicated to be successful, but it should complement and enhance the food. See the serving suggestions chart for food that each sauce will accompany particularly well.

Cream Sauce

Chunky tomato sauce

23 mins

Standing time: none

A tasty tomato sauce will perk up all sorts of family fare.

1 carrot, finely chopped
1 large onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
6 black olives, stoned, chopped
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine or vegetable stock
1 bay leaf
large pinch dried thyme
salt and pepper

MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

How to microwave Chunky tomato sauce

Place *the carrot, onion and oil in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Stir once.*

Stir *in all the remaining ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes until boiling.*

Stir, *then reduce to 50% (Medium). Microwave uncovered, for 8-10 minutes until thickened. Stir once.*

How to serve classic sauces

SAUCE	DESCRIPTION	SERVE WITH
Bearnaise	Rich, classic French sauce	Prime steaks, fish, tongue, vegetables
Bechamel	French classic white sauce	Poultry, pasta, vegetables, eggs
Anchovy	Variation of Béchamel	Fish
Egg	Variation of Bechamel	Fish or cold chicken
Mornay	Cheese variation of Béchamel	Eggs, fish, vegetables, gratins
Mustard	Variation of Béchamel	Smoked or white fish, vegetables, pork
Tarragon	Variation of Bechamel	Chicken, white fish, vegetables
Brown	Dark, rich gravy	All kinds of meat and game. Use for reheating meat.
Cider	Light, fruity sauce	Ham, gammon steaks or pork chops
Cream	Rich, creamy sauce	Vegetables, chicken or white fish
Egg and lemon	Egg-enriched pouring sauce	Game birds or meat
Lemon	Tangy, clear sauce	Chicken, ham, meatballs
Rose	Herb-flavoured wine sauce	Chicken, turkey, pork or gammon
Savoury soured cream	Tangy sauce with mushrooms	Veal escalopes, pork chops, gammon, game
Tomato	Chunky, spooning sauce	Pasta, pizzas, gammon, fish, poultry, barbecued food or sausages

Cream sauce

6½ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
250ml / 9fl oz vegetable stock
150ml / ¼pt single cream
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

MAKES 275-425ml / ½-¾pt

1 Melt the butter in a covered bowl for 30-45 seconds at 100% (High).
2 Stir in the flour and cook at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes.
3 Blend in vegetable stock. Cook at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes.
4 Stir in the cream and parsley and season to taste. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes until the sauce is hot and smoothly blended. Stir once or twice.

Brown sauce

20½ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
225g / 8oz mushrooms, very finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
375ml / 13fl oz red wine or half red wine and half stock
large pinch dried thyme
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls single cream

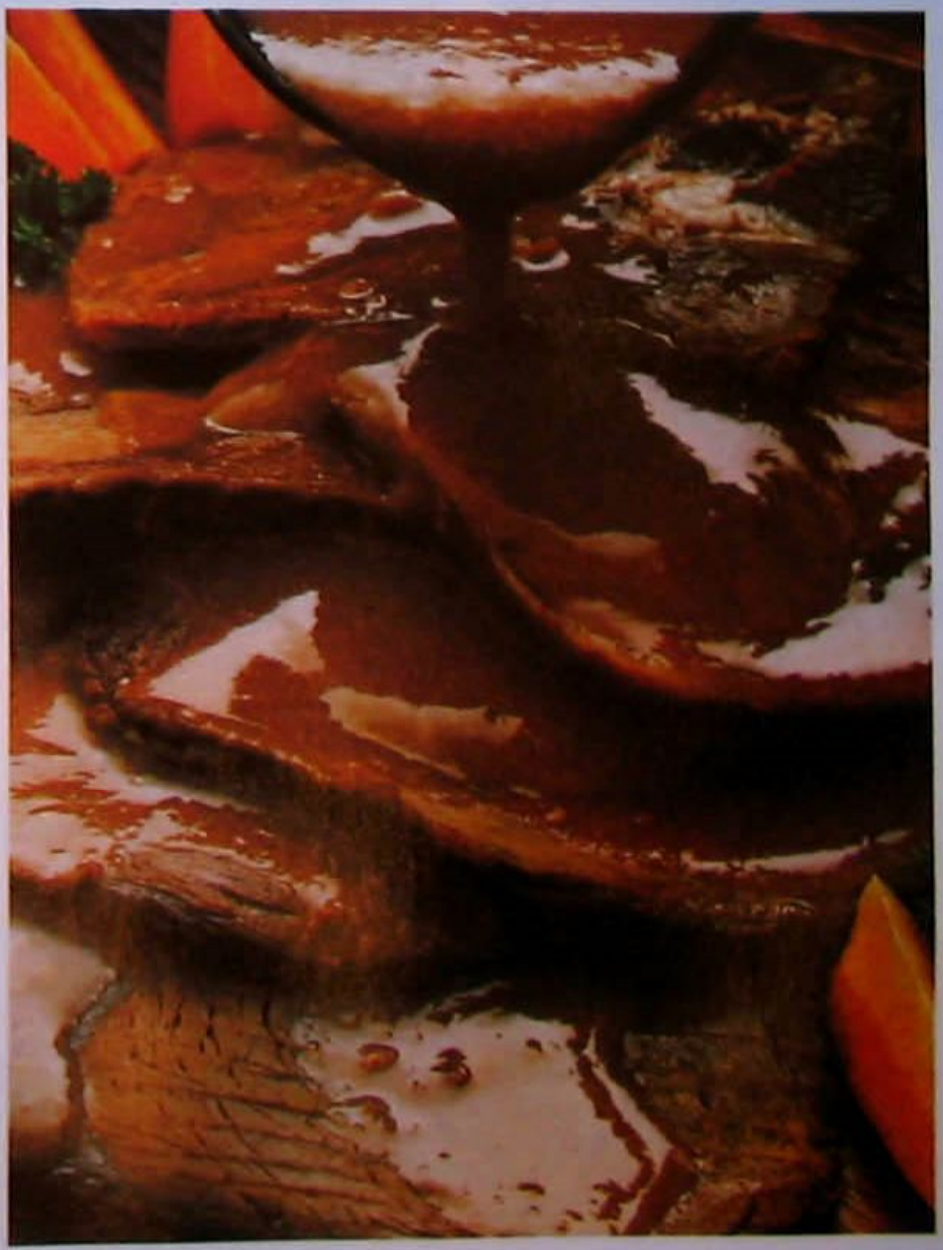
MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

1 Microwave the butter and mushrooms in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until the mushrooms are softened.
2 Stir in the flour and microwave for 30 seconds at 100% (High).
3 Gradually blend in the wine, mixing until smooth. Add the thyme, bay leaf and season to taste.
4 Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 10-12 minutes, until thick. Stir every 3 minutes.
5 Stir in the cream and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes. Strain if wished, before serving.

Brown Sauce

Golden rules for perfect sauces

- *Use a bowl and not a dish with sharp corners (such as a soufflé dish). This prevents any flour overcooking at the edges.*
- *Use a wire whisk to mix and stir a cream or smooth sauce. This ensures a good sheen and a smooth, lump-free consistency.*
- *If using flour or cornflour, make sure that it is well cooked to avoid a starchy-tasting sauce.*
- *Stir the sauce frequently during cooking to even out the heat distribution and to prevent it sticking to the bowl. Always follow instructions and timings carefully.*
- *If adding single, double or soured cream, cook the sauce at 50% (Medium) to prevent it curdling and separating.*
- *Stir frequently when reheating sauces.*



Savoury soured cream sauce

10¾ mins

Standing time: none

Serve this sauce with roast meat and game and add the meat juices for extra flavour.

25g / 1oz butter
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls dry sherry
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
salt and pepper

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

Left: *Savoury Soured Cream Sauce*
Right: *Lemon sauce*

1 Melt the butter for 15-30 seconds at 100% (High) in a covered bowl. Add the mushrooms to the butter, cover and microwave for 3 minutes at 100% (High).
2 Stir in the flour and cook, uncovered, for 30 seconds.
3 Gradually blend in the sherry, soured cream and stock. Mix thoroughly until smooth. Season to taste.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-9 minutes, or until thickened. Stir twice and watch carefully to make sure the sauce does not boil or the cream will separate.

Lemon sauce

5 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
275ml / ½pt chicken stock
salt and pepper

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Blend the cornflour, lemon juice and zest until smooth. Stir in the stock and season to taste.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until thickened. Stir halfway through and on removal.

Rosé sauce

14½ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
1 onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 celery stalk, sliced
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
150ml / ¼pt rosé wine
10ml / 2tsp tomato purée or paste
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried sage
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Put the butter, onion, pepper and celery into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until softened.
2 Stir in the flour and microwave for 30 seconds at 100% (High).
3 Blend in the stock, rosé wine and tomato purée until smooth; add herbs and seasoning to taste.
4 Cook at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, until the sauce has thickened. Stir every 2 minutes.

Cider sauce

24 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, finely chopped
1 dessert apple, finely chopped
90ml / 6tbls chicken stock
275ml / ½pt dry cider
salt and pepper
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
15-30ml / 1-2tbls water

MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

1 Place the onion, apple and chicken stock in a bowl. Microwave covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 15 minutes, until the onion and apple are quite soft.
2 Stir in the cider and salt and pepper to taste. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Blend the cornflour with the water, then stir it into the sauce.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened. Stir twice.

Blender Béarnaise sauce

1¾ mins

Standing time: none

If you do not have a food processor or blender, an alternative recipe for Béarnaise sauce can be found on page 572.

3 egg yolks
7.5ml / ½tbls white wine vinegar
7.5ml / ½tbls dry white wine
large pinch fresh or dried tarragon
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz butter
15ml / 1tbls minced or very finely chopped onion

MAKES 150ml / ¼pt

1 Combine the egg yolks, vinegar, wine, tarragon and salt and pepper to taste in a food processor or blender. Blend for about 5 seconds or until smooth.
2 Place the butter and onion in a jug and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for ¾-1¼ minutes, until the butter is bubbling.
3 Pour the butter and onion mixture on to the egg yolk mixture in a steady stream, blending at low speed until the sauce thickens.
4 Pour the sauce into a serving dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes or until the sauce is thick and creamy. Stir every 30 seconds.

VARIATION
If a thinner sauce is required, do not reheat in the microwave after blending and serve in a sauce boat.

Egg and lemon sauce

8 mins

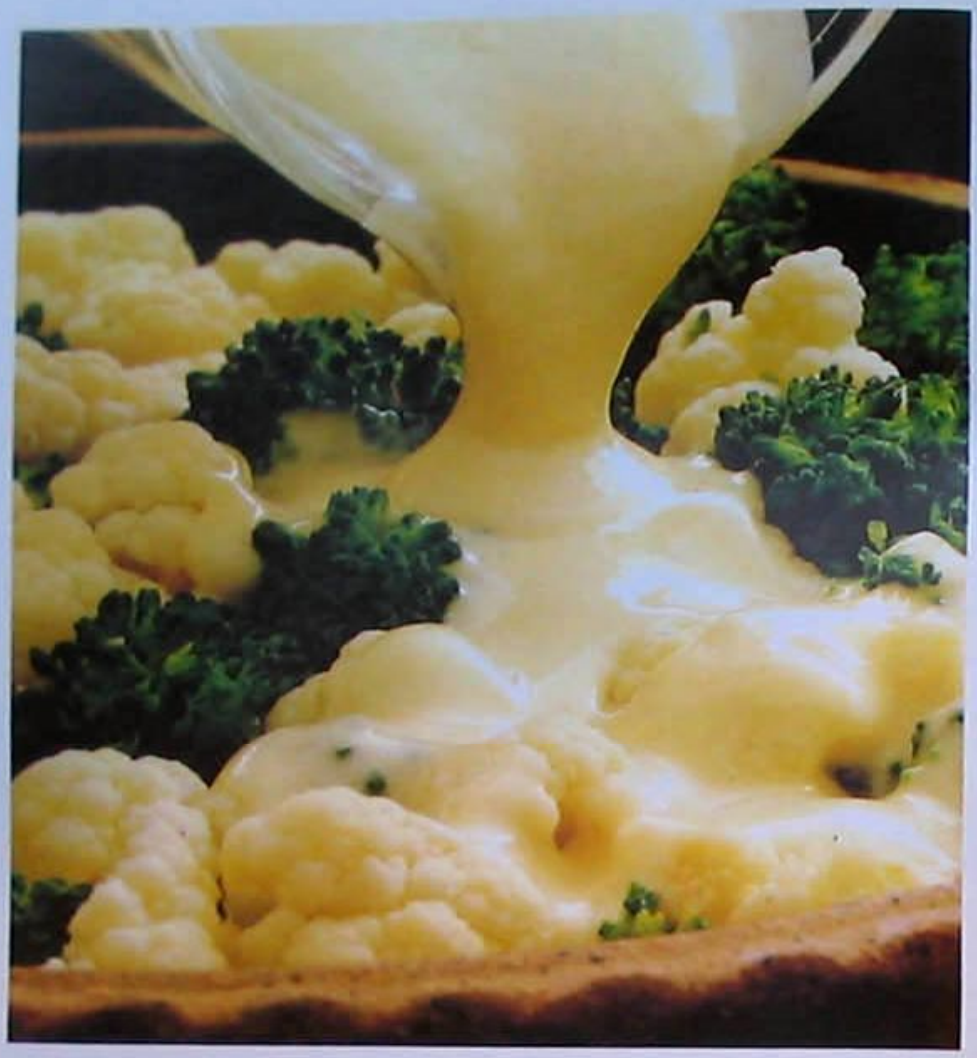
Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls made English mustard
275ml / ½pt single cream
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
salt and pepper
120ml / 8tbls milk
1 egg yolk

MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

1 Put the mustard into a bowl and very carefully blend in the single cream with a wooden spoon. Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste and stir until thoroughly blended.
2 Cover the bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes or until hot.
3 Beat the milk and egg yolk together, then beat in a little of the hot sauce.
4 Whisk the mixture back into the remaining sauce, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes until the sauce is slightly thickened. Stir the mixture twice during cooking.

Blender Béarnaise Sauce



Above: *Mornay Sauce*
Left: *Béchamel Sauce*

Béchamel sauce

8 mins

Standing time: none

The onion and bay leaf give a subtle flavour to this white sauce.

25g / 1oz butter
1 small onion, minced
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt single cream
1 small bay leaf

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Microwave the butter and onion in a bowl at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the onion is tender.

2 Stir in the flour and salt and pepper to taste. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute.

3 Gradually blend in the cream, then add the bay leaf and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes, or until the sauce thickens. Stir the mixture three times during cooking. Strain the sauce and serve.

VARIATIONS

- For **Anchovy sauce,** stir 15-30ml / 1-2tbls anchovy essence or sauce and a little lemon juice into the strained sauce.
- For **Egg Sauce,** add 1 chopped hard-boiled egg and 10ml / 2tsp snipped chives to the strained sauce.
- For **Mornay sauce,** add 60-90ml /4-6tbls mixed grated Parmesan and Gruyère cheese and 2.5ml / ½tsp French mustard after straining and stir until the cheese has melted.
- For **Tarragon sauce,** add 15ml / 1tbls freshly chopped tarragon after straining the sauce.
- For **Mustard Sauce,** stir 15ml / 1tsp made English mustard, 15ml / 1tsp white wine vinegar and 15ml / 1tsp caster sugar into the strained sauce.

Game birds

Game cooks superbly in the microwave. The fast cooking method means maximum flavour is retained, while the meat stays moist and succulent. Roasted or casseroled, game makes a truly appetizing meal.

Pheasant, grouse and partridge are the most well known game birds and are fairly easily available during the shooting season fresh from the butchers or from large supermarkets. Birds are also sold frozen and are often available from supermarkets for some time after the season's end. Pheasant weigh from 700g-1.4kg / 1½-3lb and although a large bird could serve four people, it is more customary to buy a brace for four. Grouse and partridge are smaller birds, but one bird will still comfortably serve two.

Unlike these birds, guinea fowl, pigeon and quail are available throughout the year from butchers and supermarkets. Guinea fowl are the largest of the game birds, weighing 1.2-1.5kg / 2¾-3¼lb, and will serve four. The smaller wood pigeon, however, will only serve one per person and quail, the smallest of the birds, weigh, once dressed, only 100g / 4oz each, so use two per person.

Most game is best cooked at 50% (Medium) which ensures even cooking and gives the skin time to dry out. Pheasant, partridge and grouse are all excellent roasted. Colouring agents like soy sauce, paprika or gravy browning can be rubbed into the skin if an extra rich colour is required. Weigh before cooking and microwave at 50% (Medium) allowing 8-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb. A roasting bag helps keep the meat moist and aids browning since the surface is automatically basted with juices. Stand for 10 minutes after cooking. Guinea fowl and quail can be roasted or casseroled but the strong flavour of wood pigeon makes it better suited to casseroling. Be sure not to overcook game birds — their flesh quickly becomes tough and dry.

Roast Pheasant with Port Gravy

RAY DEANS

How to microwave Roast pheasant

Wipe *and dry pheasant. Weigh and calculate cooking time, allowing 8-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Mix 15g / ½oz butter with 2.5ml / ½tsp gravy browning and spread over bird.*

Place *pheasant, breast side down, on a roasting rack inside a large roasting bag. Fasten bag loosely with a rubber band to allow space for steam produced during cooking to escape.*

Place *the pheasant on a roasting tray or a large dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for half of the calculated time, allowing 8-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb.*

Turn *pheasant breast side up and cook for remaining time or until juices run clear when pierced with a skewer. Stand for 10 minutes covered loosely with foil.*

Freezer notes

To thaw frozen game: leave bird in freezer wrapper; remove any metal ties. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Halfway through thawing, remove the bird from the freezer bag and place on a plate. Shielding wings and legs with well-secured small, smooth pieces of foil if they are getting warm.

Stand bird for 5 minutes; remove foil. Remove any giblets and rinse out icy, but not frozen, cavity with cold water.

Wipe out cavity with absorbent paper to dry.

Microtips

Bread sauce is the ideal accompaniment to roast game and can be made in a microwave in minutes. Simply mix together in a bowl ½ small grated onion, 1 bay leaf, a good pinch of ground cloves, 150ml / ¼pt milk, 50g / 2oz fresh white bread, sliced, with crusts removed and diced, 25g / 1oz diced butter and plenty of seasoning. While game is standing, microwave the mixture at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, mashing and stirring twice. Remove bay leaf. Flavour with grated nutmeg instead of cloves, if liked.

Roast pheasant with port gravy

26 mins

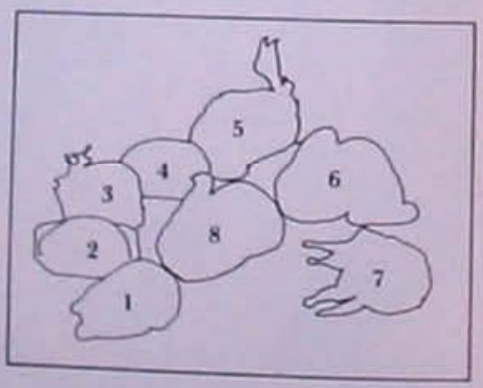
Standing time: 10 mins

If a large 1.4kg / 3lb bird is not available buy two smaller pheasant, of an equal weight, to serve four.

1 oven-ready pheasant, trussed, weighing approximately 1.4kg / 3lb
15g / ½oz butter, softened
2.5ml / ½tsp gravy browning
1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
juice of ½ lemon
75ml / 3fl oz port
5ml / 1tsp sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Wipe pheasant and dry with absorbent paper.
2 Weigh bird and calculate cooking time, allowing 8-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb.
3 Mix butter and gravy browning and spread over bird. Press garlic into cavity, then follow steps 2,3 and 4 for Roast Pheasant.
4 While standing, blend cornflour with the lemon juice in a small bowl. Add meat juices from bag, port, sugar and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until thickened, stirring once. Pour gravy into warmed sauce boat. Serve pheasant with the port gravy and plenty of game chips or potato crisps.



Key to game birds, opposite: 1 *Partridge*, **2** *Partridge*, **3** *Wood pigeon*, **4** *Wood Pigeon*, **5** *Hen pheasant (a plumper bird)*, **6** *Guinea fowl*, **7** *Cock pheasant*, **8** *Quails and quail's eggs.*

Cook's notes

Game is traditionally served with its own special garnishes. Because game meat is lean it can take rich sauces containing wine, vermouth, port, brandy and cream. Bread sauce (see Microtips, page 620) is a favourite. Tangy preserves especially redcurrant jelly, are also popular.

Game birds can be served with most vegetables but potatoes are particularly suitable to soak up rich gravy. Game chips — wafer thin potato slices deep-fried until crisp — are another traditional accompaniment, but plain potato crisps are a good alternative.

Quail with tomato sauce

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Quail has a less 'gamey' flavour than other birds and is best served with a delicate sauce that will not mask its mild taste.

4 oven-ready quail, about 100g / 4oz each

MARINADE

1 clove garlic, crushed
½ small onion, finely chopped
150ml / 5fl oz tomato juice
12 juniper berries, crushed
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
15g / ½oz butter, softened
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour mixed with 15ml / 1tbls water
1 tomato, skinned with seeds removed and flesh diced
30ml / 2tbls double cream
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste

SERVES 2-4

1 Mix garlic, onion, tomato juice, juniper berries, Worcestershire sauce and seasoning in a large bowl, add quail, cover and marinate in refrigerator for 8 hours.

2 Drain quail, reserving marinade. Pat birds dry with absorbent paper. Spread with the softened butter and place on a roasting rack inside a large roasting bag. Fasten loosely with a non-metallic tag.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, rearranging quail on rack once during cooking. Transfer to warmed serving dish and stand for 5 minutes, covered loosely with foil.

4 Blend cornflour with water in a bowl. Add marinade, tomato, double cream, tomato purée and any meat juices from bag.

5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, stirring once until thickened. Serve with quail.

PAUL WEBSTER

Cook's notes

KAY DUNN

Unless you buy ready-trussed quail, it will be necessary to secure legs so they don't overcook. Press legs into body of bird by pushing a wooden cocktail stick through the leg joint and into breast. Repeat other side. Remember to remove the cocktail sticks before serving the birds.

Game casserole

37¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Use 900g / 2lb weight of game — either three or four wood pigeons or, for a less strong tasting casserole, use a mixture of wood pigeon, partridge and grouse.

900g / 2lb of oven-ready wood pigeon, grouse or partridge, each bird cut into 2
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls clear honey
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced

MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls oil
60ml / 4tbls cider vinegar or wine vinegar
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
150ml / 5fl oz apple juice or cider
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Mix together marinade ingredients. Wipe game, place in bowl and pour over marinade. Cover and marinate for 6-8 hours.
2 Drain meat and put to one side. Reserve marinade.
3 Place butter in a large dish and microwave covered at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted.
4 Beat in flour to make a paste. Gradually add marinade, honey and soy sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until thickened, stirring once.
5 Add game, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-35 minutes or until tender.
6 Stir in apple slices and mushrooms and microwave for a further 4-5 minutes until apples are tender. Stand for 10 minutes.

VARIATION
Game with orange: substitute orange juice for apple juice or cider in the marinade and replace apple slices with the segments of two oranges with white pith and membrane removed.

Guinea fowl in red wine

29 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb guinea fowl, jointed into 8 pieces
225g / 8oz thick back or lean bacon rashers, derinded
12 shallots, quartered

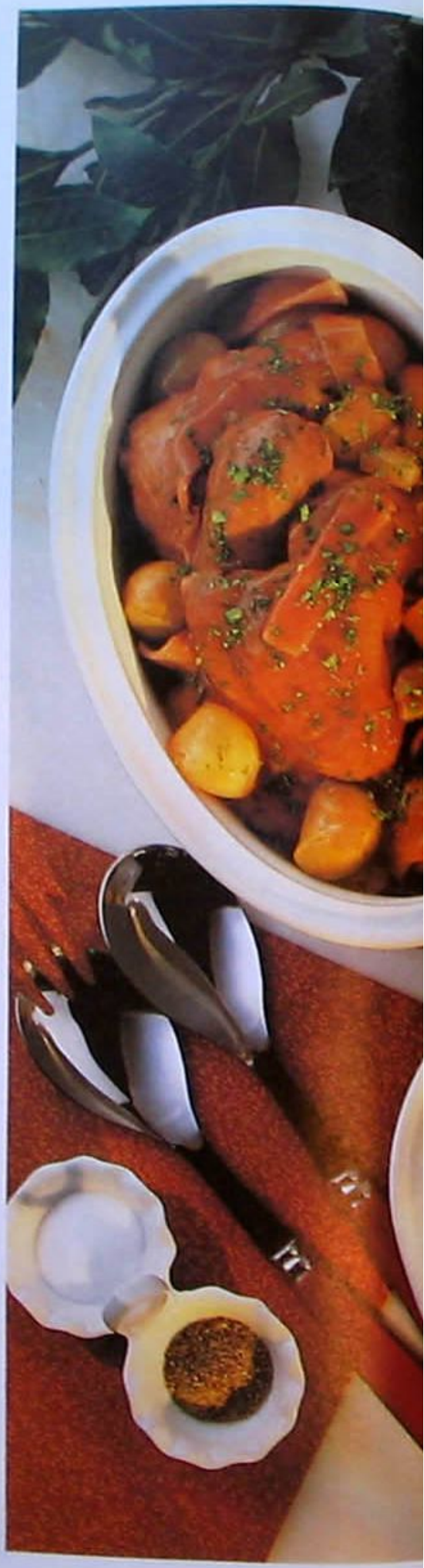
SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / 5fl oz hot chicken stock
300ml / 10fl oz red wine
15ml / 1tbls light brown sugar
2 cloves garlic, crushed
15ml / 1tbls freshly chopped mixed herbs or 5ml / 1tsp dried
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a large dish and microwave at 100% (High) for ½-1 minute or until melted.
2 Blend in flour to make a thin paste. Gradually whisk in stock and wine, then add sugar, garlic, herbs, tomato purée and seasoning.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes until thickened, stirring once.
4 Add guinea fowl, bacon and shallots and stir well. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes until guinea fowl is tender, stirring once half-way through cooking. Allow to stand for 10 minutes.

Cook's notes

Either ask your butcher to joint guinea fowl, or cut it into eight pieces yourself using poultry shears or a sharp knife. To joint the bird, cut off the legs and cut each leg into two. Cut off each of the wings, leaving a little piece of breast attached with each wing. Then cut the remaining breast into two portions.



From top left clockwise: *Guinea Fowl in Red Wine; Partridge and Pasta Salad; Game Casserole*

PAUL WEBSTER

Partridge and pasta salad

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

275g / 10oz white or green tagliatelle
1 bunch spring onions, trimmed and cut diagonally
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 ripe avocado, sliced; tossed in 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
salt and pepper
2 × 275g / 10oz oven-ready partridges, each cut into 2
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice
12mm / ½in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter, softened
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour
60ml / 4tbls redcurrant jelly
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
½ bunch watercress, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place pasta in a large bowl. Cover with boiling water and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until tender. Drain.

2 Place onions in a shallow dish with 15ml / 1tbls of the oil. Stir in mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once. Add avocado slices, tomatoes and seasoning.

3 Wipe game with absorbent paper and spread with allspice and ginger. Dot with butter and place on a roasting rack over a large dish.

4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12½ minutes, turning portions halfway through cooking. Cover loosely with foil and allow to stand for 5 minutes.

5 Blend cornflour with a little cold water in a small bowl. Add meat juices from the dish, redcurrant jelly and vinegar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until thickened, stirring once.

6 Toss pasta into mushroom mixture with remaining oil. Reheat at 100% (High) for 1 minute.

7 Brush partridge with redcurrant glaze. Serve on top of pasta. Garnish with watercress.

Currants and berries

Currants and berries have a short season so make the most of them while they are available. Cooked in the microwave they keep every ounce of their fresh, tangy flavour.

Fresh currants and berries should be plump and firm, with a good flush on their skins. When buying punnets, check that the berries at the bottom are not wet or crushed as they will soon go mouldy. If buying loose or picking your own, keep the fruit in small punnets to avoid the berries being crushed by their own weight. Store in the refrigerator and use within a few days.

Currants are available in three varieties, black, red and white. White currants are the sweetest and relatively scarce. You can use them instead of black or red currants and adjust the amount of sugar in the recipe accordingly. Using them together with black and redcurrants, in a compote for example, helps balance flavours because they are less tart. Black and redcurrants are perfect in tansies and whips, giving an irresistibly rich colour to these desserts. However, they are equally good poached and left whole for pies and cobblers.

Cranberries are large, hard berries, with a sour taste. They are particularly good made into sauces and preserves or cakes.

Blueberries are blue-black in colour, with a purple bloom. Blueberry pie is a favourite American recipe, but the berries can also be poached and used to decorate cheesecakes, or soaked in port and served with sugar.

Prepare the fruit just before using. Place it in a colander and rinse under cold running water, then drain on absorbent paper. Cranberries and blueberries need no further preparation, but strip currants from their stalks (see steps, opposite).

Blackcurrant and sherry trifle

13½ mins

Standing time: none

8 trifle sponge, or sponge cakes
45m / 3tbls blackcurrant jam
275g / 10oz raspberries
225g / 8oz blackcurrants, stripped
65g / 2½oz caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls water
75g / 5tbls sherry or rum
1 egg
40g / 1½oz cornflour*
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring
575ml / 1pt milk
225ml / ½pt whipping cream
ratafias to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Halve the sponges and sandwich together with jam. Arrange in the base of the dish and top with most of the berries.
2 Place the blackcurrants in a large bowl. Stir in the sugar and water and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, stirring once. Stir in sherry or rum and pour over sponge.
3 Beat together, the egg, cornflour, sugar, orange zest and juice and flavouring. Microwave the milk at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Whisk into the egg, then strain back into the bowl.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7 minutes, whisking every 2 minutes until thickened. Cool slightly, pour over trifle; chill.
5 Decorate with whipped cream, ratafias and raspberries.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 4½tbls cornflour.

Redcurrant and peach pie

15 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb redcurrants, stripped from their stalks
30ml / 2tbls sugar
275ml / ½pt water
20ml / 4tsp arrowroot
3 peaches, skinned, halved, stoned and sliced, or 425g / 15oz can sliced peaches, well drained
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
45ml / 3tbls redcurrant jelly

SERVES 6

1 Place the redcurrants in a large bowl, stir in the sugar and water; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes; stir twice.
2 Blend the arrowroot with 15ml / 1tbls water and stir into the currants. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes; stir once. Cool.
3 Spoon into the pastry case; top with the peach slices.
4 To glaze the pie, place the redcurrant jelly in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring once. Brush over the fruit and allow to set.

Left to right: *Redcurrant Tansy, Blackcurrant and Sherry Trifle, Redcurrant and Peach Pie*

How to microwave currants

Pick over *450g / 1lb currants. Hold the stalk at one end and strip the currants from the stalk into a bowl using the prongs of a fork.*

Stir *in caster sugar, if using, and 30ml / 2tbls water. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and place in the microwave cooker.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the fruit is tender, stirring once during cooking. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.*

Redcurrant tansy

13 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb redcurrants, stripped from their stalks
100g / 4oz sugar
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 egg yolks
275ml / ½pt milk
2-3 drops vanilla flavouring
150ml / ¼pt double cream
extra redcurrants to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Place the prepared currants in a large bowl. Stir in the sugar and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until tender, stirring twice. Crush the fruit with a fork and set aside.
2 Mix the caster sugar with the cornflour. Gradually blend in beaten egg and egg yolks. Place the milk in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes. Whisk into egg mixture, strain back into bowl; stir in flavouring.
3 Microwave the custard at 50% (Medium) for 5-7 minutes, whisking after 2 minutes, then every 30 seconds. Cool, then chill.
4 Whisk the cream until it forms soft peaks. Fold the custard into the redcurrants, then lightly fold in cream. Serve in small dishes.

Blackcurrant cobbler

11 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

675g / 1½lb blackcurrants, stripped from their stalks
45ml / 3tbls juice plus zest of 1 orange
100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
100g / 4oz wholemeal flour
large pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
25g / 1oz caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt milk
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar

SERVES 4

RAY DUNN

Left: *Blackcurrant Whip*
Right: *Blackcurrant Cobbler*

1 Put the fruit and juice into a 20cm / 8in dish. Stir in the sugar.
2 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 6 minutes; stir once.
3 Sift the flours with the salt and baking powder. Add the bran from the sieve. Rub in the butter then stir in the sugar and orange zest. Add enough milk to mix to a soft but not sticky dough.
4 Roll out the dough to a thickness of 12mm / ½in. Cut into 5cm / 2in rounds. Arrange the rounds around the edge of the dish. Brush with milk and sprinkle with sugar.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the topping is set; turn the dish once. Stand for 3 minutes. Brown under the grill.

Blackcurrant whip

4¼ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz blackcurrants, stripped from their stalks
30ml / 2tbls water
272ml / ½pt low-fat natural yoghurt
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
30ml / 2tbls sugar
2 egg whites
20g / ¾oz blanched almonds

SERVES 4

1 Purée the blackcurrants with the water. Sieve into a bowl and stir in the yoghurt.
2 Sprinkle the gelatine over 30ml / 2tbls water in a bowl; soak for 5 minutes. Microwave at 100%

(High) for 20-30 seconds.
3 Pour the gelatine on to the purée, stirring constantly. Add sugar to taste.
4 Whisk the egg whites until standing in soft peaks, then fold evenly into the purée. Spoon in to a serving dish or glasses. Cover and chill until set.
5 To decorate, microwave the almonds on a plate at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, stirring once. Allow to cool, then sprinkle over whip. Or top with extra yoghurt and cooked blackcurrants.

Slimmer's notes

Omit the almonds for a perfect slimmer's dessert at only 90 Cal / 380kJ per portion.

Blueberry pie

10 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in pastry case (see page 370)
450g / 1lb blueberries
100g / 4oz sugar
50g / 2oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp finely grated lemon zest
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg

TOPPING
50g / 2oz quick-cook rolled oats *
30ml / 2tbls brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, diced

SERVES 6

1 Combine the blueberries with the sugar, flour, lemon zest and spices. Turn into the pastry case.
2 Put the oats, sugar and cinnamon into a bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle over the fruit.
3 Place the pie on a piece of greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, rotating the dish ⅓ turn once.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes until the filling is thickened and bubbling, rotating the dish ¼ turn every 2 minutes.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use ½ cup rolled oats.

Freezer notes

Frozen blueberries can be used. To thaw 450g / 1lb frozen blueberries, place in a bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-12 minutes or until a few berries feel warm, stirring twice. Let stand for 10-15 minutes.

Currant compote

8 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb redcurrants, stripped from their stalks
450g / 1lb blackcurrants, stripped from their stalks
225g / ½lb whitecurrants, stripped from their stalks
90-120ml / 6-8tbls sugar
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
30ml / 2tbls rum

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the fruit in a large bowl with the sugar and orange juice.
2 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring carefully two or three times.
3 Stir in the rum. Serve hot.

Blueberry Pie

Sweet cranberry loaf

21 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, softened
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
2 large eggs
50g / 2oz walnut halves, chopped
50g / 2oz desiccated coconut
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
225g / 8oz cranberries
376g / 13¼oz can crushed pineapple, drained, with 30ml / 2tbls juice reserved

DECORATION
30ml / 2tbls icing sugar
50g / 2oz desiccated coconut

SERVES 6-8

1 Line the base of 1.7L / 3pt loaf dish with greaseproof paper. Beat together all the cake ingredients in a large bowl until blended. Turn the mixture into the dish, level the surface; place on an upturned plate.

2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes, rotating ¼ turn every 2 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, or until well risen, rotating ¼ turn every 2 minutes.

3 Allow to stand in the container, covered loosely with absorbent paper for 15 minutes.

4 Cover a cooling rack with two sheets of absorbent paper and sift over a little icing sugar. Turn the cake out on the rack. Sprinkle top with sieved icing sugar and desiccated coconut.

Freezer notes

Use frozen cranberries if they are easier to obtain. To thaw, microwave on a plate at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes, rearranging every minute. Leave the cranberries to stand for 10-15 minutes before using them in recipes.

Sweet Cranberry Loaf

Cranberry sauce

16 mins

Standing time: none

This ruby red sauce makes an excellent accompaniment to roast chicken and turkey, pork and gammon. It can be served warm or cold.

350g / 12oz cranberries
150ml / ¼pt water
175g / 6oz sugar
grated zest of 1 lemon
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
½ stick of cinnamon

MAKES 575ml / 1pt

1 Place the cranberries in a large bowl and stir in the remaining ingredients.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring and crushing the berries twice. Reduce power to 20-30% (Defrost) for 8 minutes; stir twice.

3 Cover and leave to cool. The sauce thickens on cooling.

Pork chops

Pork chops are a popular freezer standby. They can be thawed in under 15 minutes in the microwave then quickly turned into some wholesome recipes to tempt both family and friends.

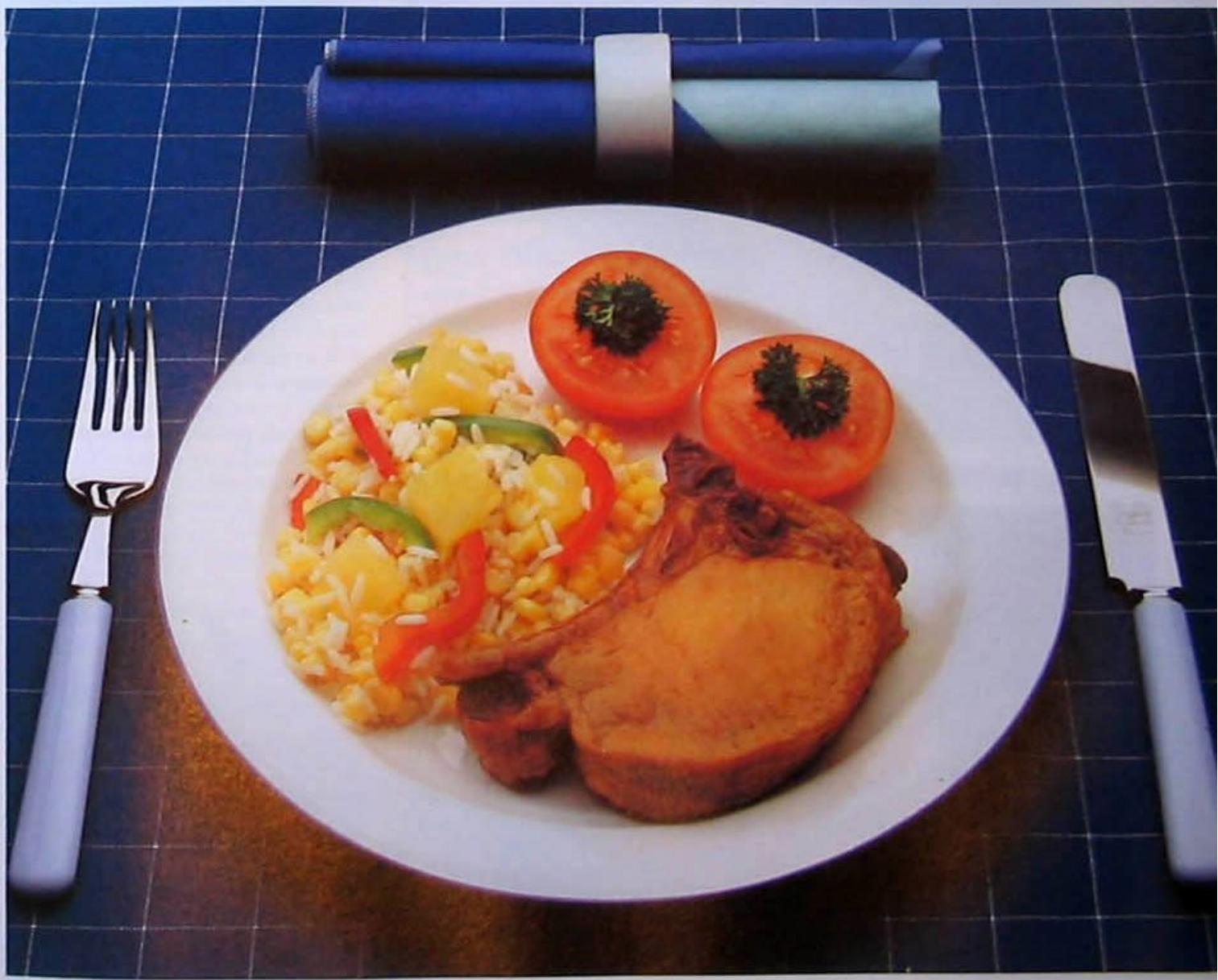
Pork has a shorter freezer life than most meats because of its high fat content. Six months is the maximum, but it is best not to freeze pork for more than four months. If you want to freeze fresh chops, choose those with firm, pinkish meat and solid, white fat. Always trim off excess fat before freezing. Wrap the chops tightly in batches of four, or the most useful number, interleaving them with freezer tissue for easy separation if liked.

Thawing frozen chops in the microwave is very quick (see steps, page 630). Standing time is important to ensure thawing right through to the centre. Once thawed the chops can quickly be made into any number of recipes.

A sauce — or covering of some kind — is useful with microwaved chops as they do not brown. For best results, brush the chops with a dark sauce, cook them in a sauce or cover them with a stuffing. Sharp, fruity sauces offset the flavour and richness of the meat.

It is best to cook chops on a medium power setting as this ensures they retain their moisture and stay deliciously tender. The meat is cooked when it is no longer pink near the bone. *Standing time allows meat to finish cooking. *This does not apply in Australia and New Zealand.

Pineapple-glazed Chops



How to thaw pork chops

Remove *the wrapping. If the chops are stacked, separate them carefully by slipping a round-bladed knife between the chops to loosen them.*

Place *on a roasting rack. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes per 450g / 1lb, or at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes per 450g / 1lb.*

RAY DUNN

Turn *the chops over and rearrange. Thaw the same amount of time again on the other side. Leave chops to stand for 10 minutes to complete thawing.*

Pineapple-glazed chops

16 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Recipe timings do not include thawing times. Serve these chops with cooked rice mixed with canned pineapple pieces, red and green pepper and canned sweetcorn. Garnish with tomato halves and parsley, if liked.

15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls pineapple juice
4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see steps above)

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the soy sauce and pineapple juice in a small bowl. Brush half over one side of the chops on the roasting rack.
2 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8 minutes. Turn and brush with the remaining sauce. Cover and microwave for 8-10 minutes, or until the chops are no longer pink, turning once. Let stand for 3-5 minutes.

Pork chops with citrus sauce

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see steps above)
45ml / 3tbls orange juice
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
1 small orange, sliced, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Arrange chops in baking dish with the thickest parts to outside.
2 Combine the juices, spices and seasoning. Pour over the chops.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes, turning every 5 minutes. Drain juices into small bowl. Let chops stand 5 minutes.
4 Stir cornflour into juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once. Pour over chops and garnish with orange.

Pork Chops with Citrus Sauce

Waldorf pork chops

21½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This stuffing goes on top of the meat, rather than inside, so that no browning agent is needed.

4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see steps opposite)
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
1 apple, cored and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls raisins
pinch of dried sage
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in the breadcrumbs.
2 Put the celery, apple and onion in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until tender. Stir in the buttered breadcrumbs, raisins, sage and seasoning.
3 Arrange the chops on the roasting rack with the thickest part of the meat to the outside. Spoon the stuffing on top of the chops, dividing it equally between them.
4 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink near the bone. Rearrange the chops two or three times during cooking as directed in the step, right.
5 Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.

Cook's notes

Exact times for cooking chops vary, according to the thickness of the meat and the size of the bones. After leaving the chops for the specified standing time, check the largest chop by cutting to the bone to see if the pork is cooked through: if the meat is still pink, microwave for a further 2-3 minutes and check in the same way.

How to rearrange Waldorf pork chops

Rearrange *chops after the first 5 minutes. Transfer one chop to a plate with a spatula. Rearrange the other chops, then return the first chop to the rack. Cover the chops with greaseproof paper again and return to the microwave to continue cooking. Rearrange the chops in the same way after 5 minutes and once more after 10 minutes.*

Italian pork chops

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, chopped
150ml / ¼pt beef stock
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2 large tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
150g / 5oz tomato purée or paste
1 dill pickle, chopped
15ml / 1tbls red wine vinegar
salt and pepper
4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see steps, page 630)

SERVES 4

Italian Pork Chops

How to microwave Italian pork chops

Put *the onion into a jug and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for about 3 minutes until tender. Blend in the remaining ingredients and pour over the thawed chops.*

Microwave, *covered, at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes, or until the meat next to the bone has lost its pink colour, turning the chops once. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.*

Cook's notes

If you have no fresh vegetables in the kitchen, use store-cupboard ingredients. Replace the onion with 30ml / 2tbls dried onion flakes and use 225g / 8oz can tomatoes, drained. Mix ingredients and microwave as directed in Step 2, above.

Pork chops on fruity stuffing

26¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

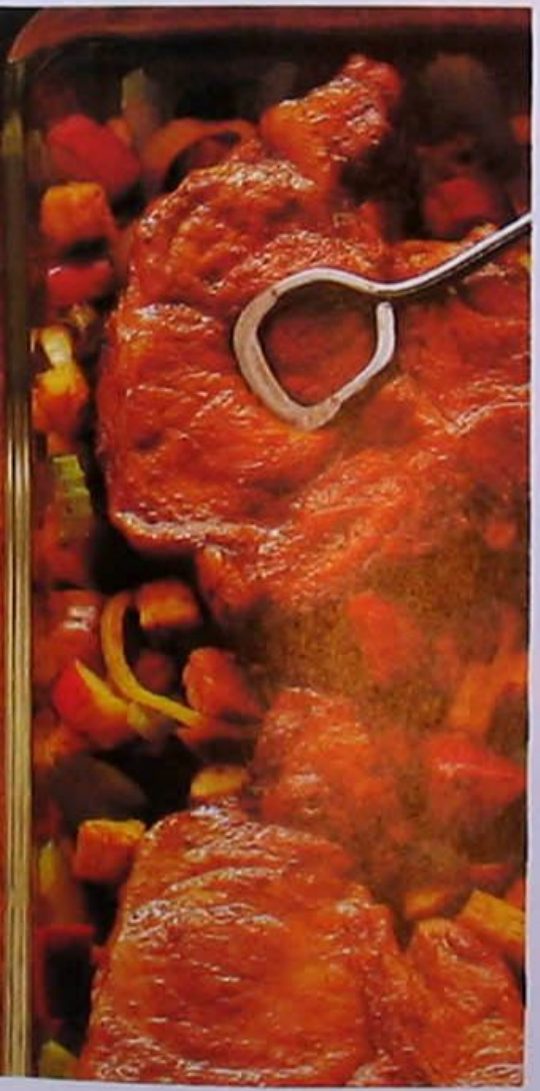
Serve this dish with a baked potato and soured cream.

4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see steps, page 630)
4 celery stalks, thinly sliced
2 dessert apples, cored and chopped
1 onion, very thinly sliced
75g / 3oz packet parsley and thyme stuffing mix, made up according to packet instructions
50g / 2oz raisins
pinch of ground nutmeg

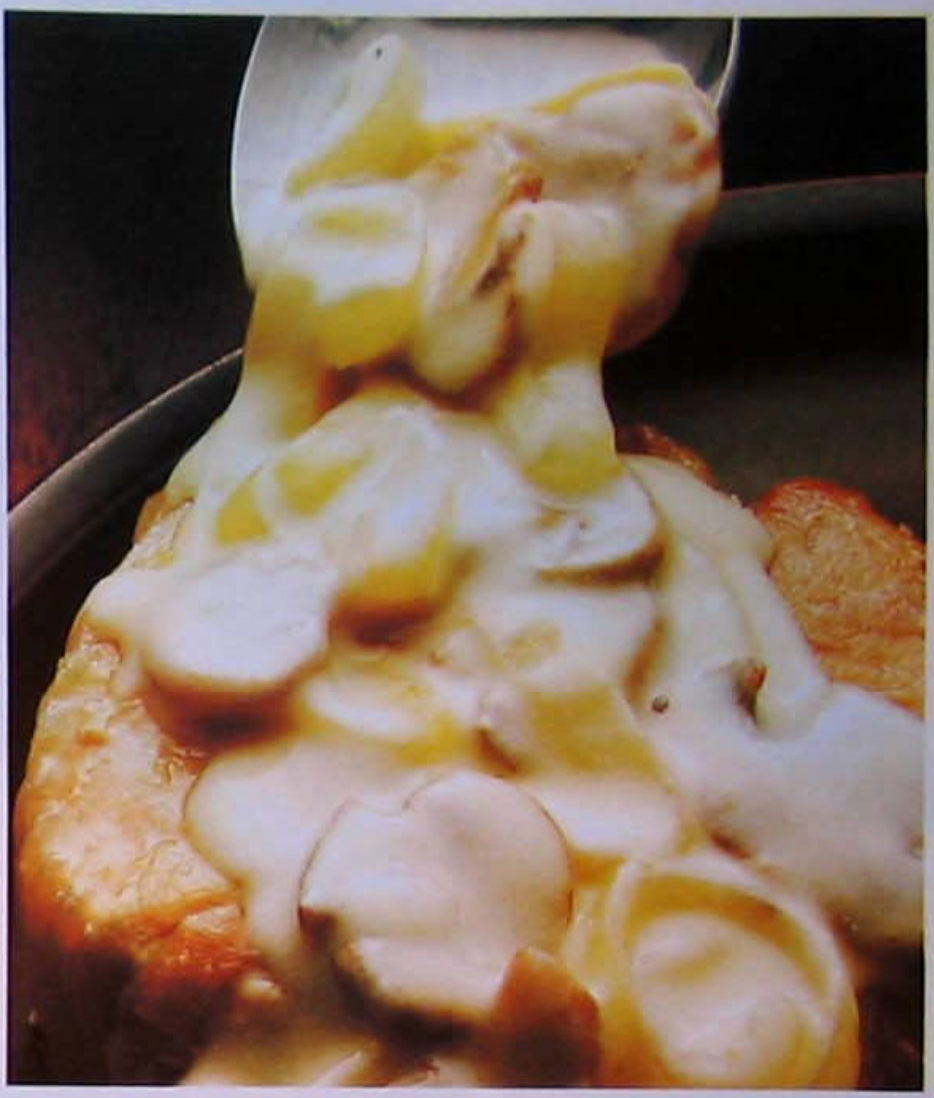
TO SERVE
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire or dark soy sauce

SERVES 4

1 Put the celery, apples and onion in a baking dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until tender.
2 Add the stuffing, raisins and nutmeg and mix well. Arrange the chops on top of the stuffing with the thickest parts of the meat to the outside of the dish.
3 Put the butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Stir in the Worcestershire or soy sauce.
4 Brush the chops with half the butter and sauce mixture. Microwave, covered with greaseproof paper, at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes. Turn the chops over and rearrange, stirring the stuffing.
5 Brush the chops with the remaining butter and sauce. Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes until the meat is no longer pink near the bone. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.



Pork Chops on Fruity Stuffing



Pork chops Stroganoff

31 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Take care not to overheat the soured cream or it will curdle.

4 frozen pork chops, thawed (see Steps, page 630)
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, sliced thinly into rings
1 garlic clove, crushed
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls white wine
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4

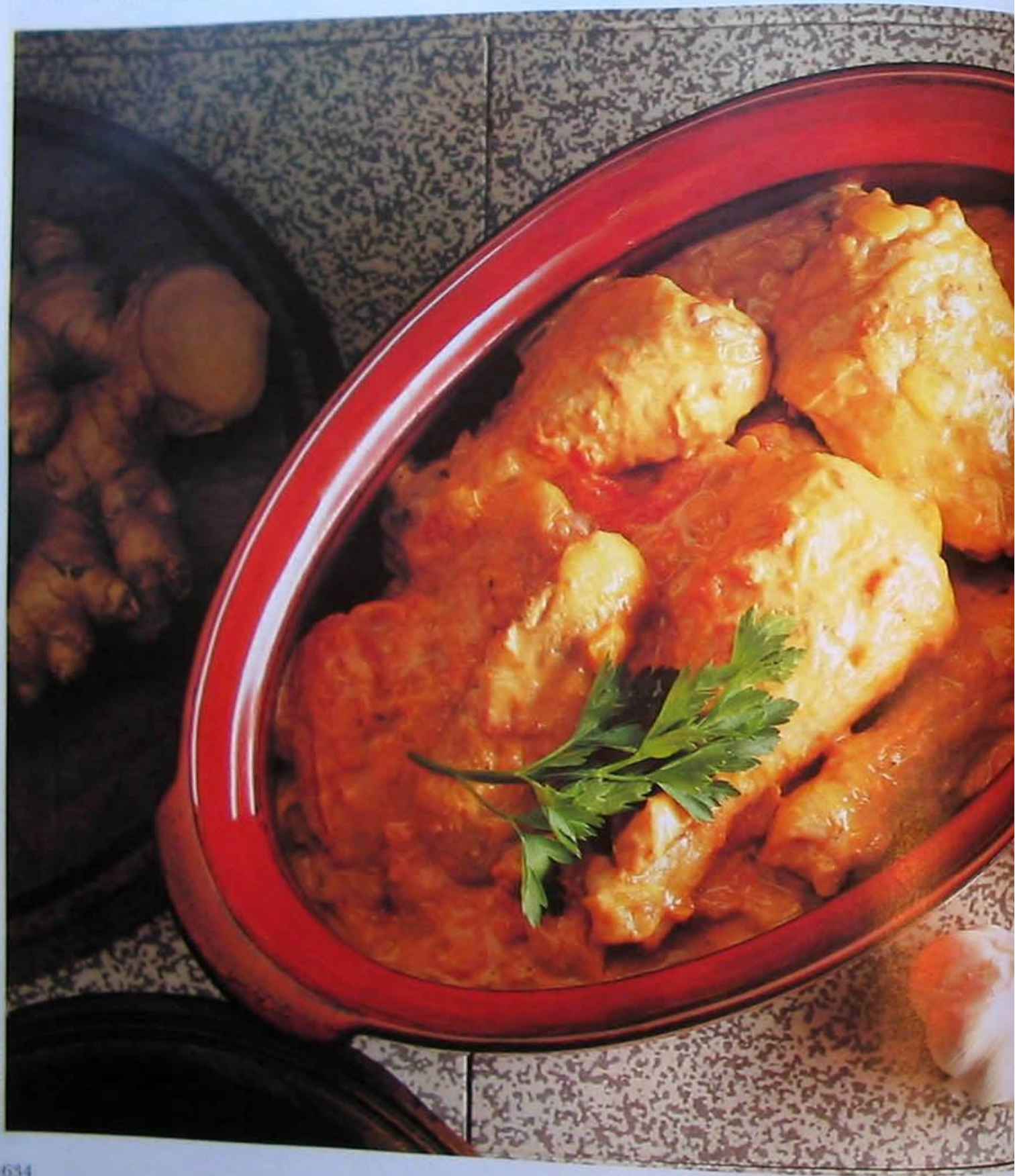
1 Put the mushrooms, onion, garlic and butter in a bowl. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until tender.
2 Add salt and pepper and the bay leaf. Lay the chops in a baking dish and spoon over the mushroom mixture.
3 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium), covered, for 23-28 minutes until the meat is no longer pink, rearranging and turning the chops two or three times. Discard the bay leaf and remove the chops to a serving plate. Stand for 3-5 minutes while making the sauce.
5 Blend the flour and white wine into the mushroom sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until thickened, stirring once or twice. Blend in the soured cream. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes to heat through. Spoon the sauce over chops and serve.

Pork Chops Stroganoff

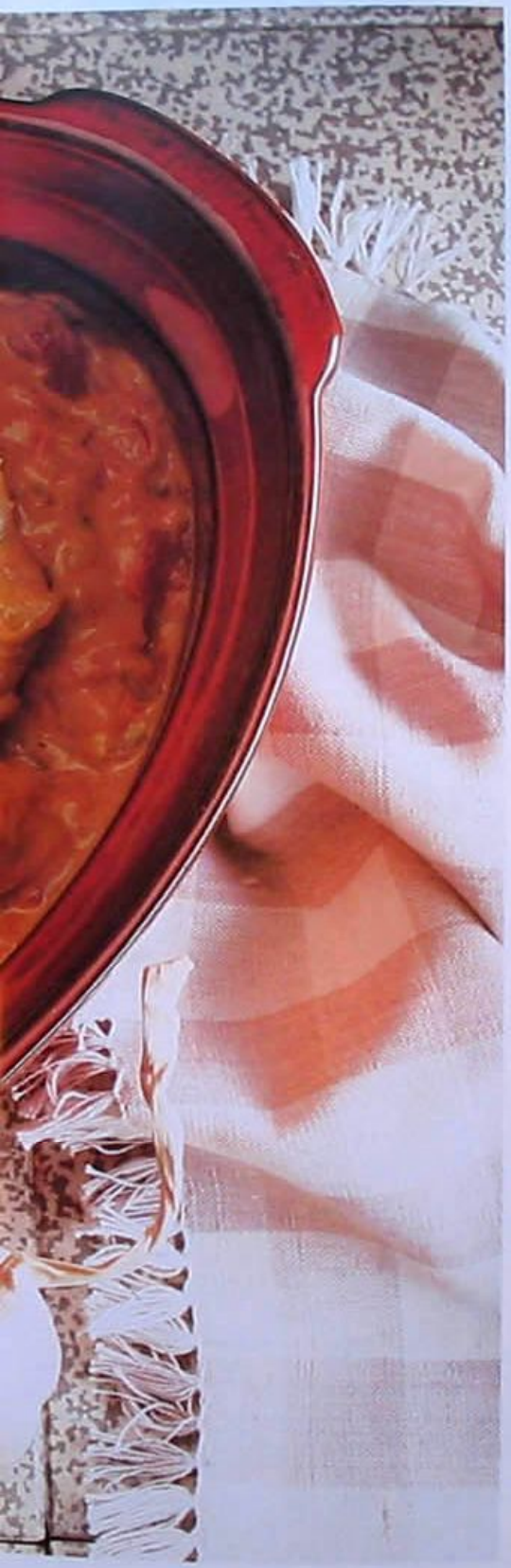
STAR RECIPE

Indian chicken

This exotic dish of chicken flavoured with spices and yoghurt cooks to perfection in the microwave — in less than 45 minutes. Served with fluffy rice and colourful accompaniments, it makes a superb dinner party dish.



Fluffy boiled rice can be cooked successfully in the microwave (see the chart page 249), or conventionally, if preferred. Toasted nuts, sultanas, chopped coriander leaves or diced red pepper can be stirred into the rice to add colour and flavour.



Indian chicken

44¼ mins

Standing time: none

6 black peppercorns
12mm / ½in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
2.5ml / ½tsp coriander seeds
2 dried bay leaves
2 dried red chillies, seeded
45ml / 3tbls curry powder
salt
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
1.8kg / 4lb chicken portions
25-40g / 1-1½oz butter
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt hot chicken stock
3 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
grated zest of ½ lemon
juice of ½ lemon
30ml / 6tsps cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
150ml / 5fl oz natural yoghurt

SERVES 4-6

1 Pound peppercorns, root ginger and coriander with a mortar and pestle. Break up bay leaves and chillies; add to the mortar and pound well again. Add 30ml / 2tbls of the curry powder and salt to taste. Add 30ml / 2tbls of the oil; mix well. Rub into chicken with fingers; cover and chill for 2 hours.

2 Heat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the chicken and turn frequently, until lightly browned all over; pressing down firmly on to browning dish. Transfer chicken to plate and keep on one side.

3 Add the remaining oil, butter, onion, garlic and pepper to a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir in the flour, remaining curry powder and then blend in the hot stock; stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until boiling, stirring several times.

4 Add the tomatoes, lemon zest and juice. Place chicken in casserole and baste well with the mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 minutes or until the chicken is tender, stirring the mixture several times.

5 Transfer the chicken to a serving dish. Blend cornflour with water; add a little hot mixture to cornflour and stir well. Add to casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring once. Stir yoghurt into casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Spoon over chicken and garnish with flat-leaved parsley. Serve with rice and accompaniments.

Accompaniments

Side dishes, called Sambals, are the perfect curry accompaniments. The number and selection served is a matter of personal choice, though ideally Sambals should be as varied as possible in texture, flavour and colour.

Tomato and Mint Salad: thinly slice 6 firm tomatoes and arrange on a plate. Sprinkle liberally with chopped shallot or mild onion and fresh mint. Drizzle with lime juice, if wished.

Banana and Coconut Spice: slice 3 bananas and toss in lemon juice to prevent discoloration, then mix with 30ml / 2tbls shredded coconut (toasted, if wished). Sprinkle with ground cinnamon to taste.

Cucumber Yoghurt Refresher: thinly slice 10cm / 4in piece peeled cucumber. Put in a colander and sprinkle with salt; leave for 30 minutes. Rinse well under cold water. Drain and pat dry on absorbent paper. Mix 1 crushed garlic clove with 150ml / 5fl oz natural yoghurt; season with pepper and stir in the sliced cucumber.

Egg and Onion Relish: chop 4 hard-boiled eggs and mix with 4 chopped spring onions and ½ red pepper, seeded and chopped.

Fruit and Nut Mix: chop 100g / 4oz dried apricots and soak in hot orange juice to cover for 30 minutes. Drain and mix with 100g / 4oz mixed whole nuts.

Cookies

More substantial than a biscuit, but less filling than a cake, crunchy cookies are always tempting — whether as a teatime favourite or a quick, any-time snack.

In minutes you can work miracles with every-day store-cupboard ingredients. There's no need for rolling out, the dough mixtures are quick to prepare and microwaving times are very short.

Several of the recipes give quantities to make large numbers of cookies. They will keep for two to three weeks in an airtight container, but it is easy to store the dough in the refrigerator and use it as you want more fresh cookies. Mixtures containing bicarbonate of soda will keep for up to one week; those with baking powder for three to four days.

As with all microwave-baked goods, cookies will not brown during cooking; conveniently, the mixtures here include spices, chocolate or treacle to add colour.

Although it is possible to freeze microwaved cookies for 2-3 weeks, it is just as quick to make up a batch as it is to defrost them.

Microwaving times for 500 watt machines are given as these can vary a great deal, particularly as many of these do not have variable power. If your 500 watt machine has variable power, cook biscuits at 100% (High).

Clockwise from top left: *Swedish Cookies; plain and decorated Peanut Butter Cookies; Chocolate Peanut Poles; Swedish Butter Balls; Swedish Pole Cookies.*

Swedish cookies

7½ mins

Standing time: 15 mins

225g / 8oz plain flour
65g / 2½oz sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp cream of tartar
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
good pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp almond flavouring
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
175g / 6oz butter, softened
36 unblanched almonds
sifted icing sugar to dust

MAKES 36

VARIATIONS

Swedish pole cookies: omit the almonds. Make a deep furrow down the centre of each strip using the handle of a knife. Microwave as for the Swedish Cookies. Remove from the cooker and spoon 30ml / 2tbls jam down the centre of each strip. Dust with icing sugar. Cut into 2.5cm / 1in diagonal strips when cool.

Swedish butter balls: form the mixture into 2.5cm / 1in balls. Place six in a large ring on greaseproof paper or freezer tissue on the base of the cooker. Press an almond on top of each one and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4½ minutes (500 watts, 3-4 minutes), turning every 30 seconds. Remove the paper with the cookies on it, leave for 3 minutes to crisp, then transfer to a wire rack using a palette knife. Leave to cool. Repeat with the remaining cookies.

How to microwave Swedish cookies

Place *all the ingredients except the almonds and extra icing sugar in a mixing bowl. Beat with an electric whisk at low speed to form a light dough. Divide into 3 equal parts.*

Shape *each piece into a 23cm / 9in strip on a 10cm / 4in wide piece of greaseproof paper. Place the strip on the paper on the turntable or floor of the microwave, or on a baking sheet.*

Press *eight or nine almonds firmly on to the strip of dough at 3mm / ⅛in intervals, forming a line down the centre. Try not to let the dough spread out sideways.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 1½-3 minutes (500 watts, 2-3 minutes) or until the surface is dry, turning every 30 seconds. Remove from the oven on the paper.*

Sprinkle *the icing sugar over the dough while still warm. Leave for 3 minutes to crisp. Cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces between nuts when almost cool. Repeat with remaining dough.*

Guidelines for microwaving cookies

- *If you have time, wrap and refrigerate the dough for at least 1 hour before use. This gives the best results, as the cookies do not spread as much during cooking.*
- *Arrange the cookies in a circle on the greaseproof paper or freezer tissue for the most efficient use of the microwave energy.*
- *Turn the paper with the cookies on it every 30 seconds during microwaving for even cooking.*
- *Remember to check the cookies after the shortest time, as microwaves vary from one model to another.*
- *Remove the cookies as soon as the surface looks dry. Further cooking will burn them.*
- *Allow 3-5 minutes standing time on the paper, according to the recipe, for the cookies to become crisp. Do not move the cookies from the paper until crisp.*
- *Remove the cookies from the paper immediately after the standing time and transfer to a wire rack using a palette knife. The bases will be unpleasantly greasy and less appetizing if the cookies are left on the paper to cool.*

Ginger cookies

10 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

100g / 4oz butter
15ml / 1tbls black treacle
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
75g / 3oz caster sugar
pinch of bicarbonate of soda

MAKES 18-22

1 Place the butter and black treacle in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute (500 watts, 1½ minutes). Stir in all the remaining ingredients.

Salted peanut cookies

15 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
1 egg, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
1.5ml / ¼tsp bicarbonate of soda
1.5ml / ¼tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz plain flour
75g / 3oz rolled oats
105ml / 7tbls puffed rice cereal
50g / 2oz salted peanuts

MAKES 30

1 Mix the butter or margarine, sugar, egg, vanilla flavouring, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and salt and beat until light and fluffy.
2 Stir in the flour and all the remaining ingredients.
3 Drop six round teaspoons of the mixture on to greaseproof paper or freezer tissue in a large ring.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes (500 watts, 2½-3½ minutes) or until the surface of the cookies is dry. Turn the paper every 30 seconds.
5 Remove the paper from the cooker with cookies on it. Leave for 3 minutes for the cookies to crisp, then transfer to a wire rack using a palette knife, and leave to cool. Repeat with the remaining mixture.

Salted Peanut Cookies

2 Knead together to make a firm dough. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3 Form the mixture into 2.5cm / 1in balls. Place six to eight balls in a large circle on a piece of greaseproof paper or freezer tissue on the turntable or floor of cooker.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes (500 watts, 2-3 minutes), turning every 30 seconds.
5 Leave to stand on the paper for 5 minutes. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool, using a palette knife.
6 Repeat the procedure with the remaining mixture.

Peanut butter cookies

18 mins

Standing time: 18 mins

75g / 3oz margarine, softened
225g / 8oz peanut butter
225g / 8oz soft brown sugar
2 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
250g / 9oz plain flour, sifted
peanut butter or jam for topping (optional)

MAKES 48

1 Mix all the ingredients except the flour and topping to a light fluffy consistency. Fold in the flour.
2 Shape the dough into 2.5cm / 1in balls. Place six to eight balls on a piece of greaseproof paper or freezer tissue on the floor of the cooker.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4½ minutes (500 watts, 3-4 minutes). Turn every 30 seconds.
4 Remove the paper with the cookies on it. Stand for 3 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool, using a palette knife.
5 Repeat the procedure with the remaining mixture. Decorate with jam or peanut butter.

VARIATIONS
Peanut butter poles: divide the dough into eight equal parts. Shape each piece into a 23 × 4cm / 9 × 1½in strip on greaseproof paper, on turntable or floor of the cooker. Flatten the top lightly with a fork. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-3 minutes (500 watts, 2½-4 minutes), turning every 30 seconds, until just dry. Allow to stand for 3 minutes. When almost cool, cut diagonally into 2.5cm / 1in strips. Repeat the procedure with the remaining seven pieces of dough.
Chocolate peanut poles: add 75g / 3oz chocolate chips to the mixture with the flour. Microwave as for the Peanut Butter Poles.

Ginger Cookies (drizzled with glacé icing) and Syrupy Oat Wedges

Syrupy oat wedges

6 mins

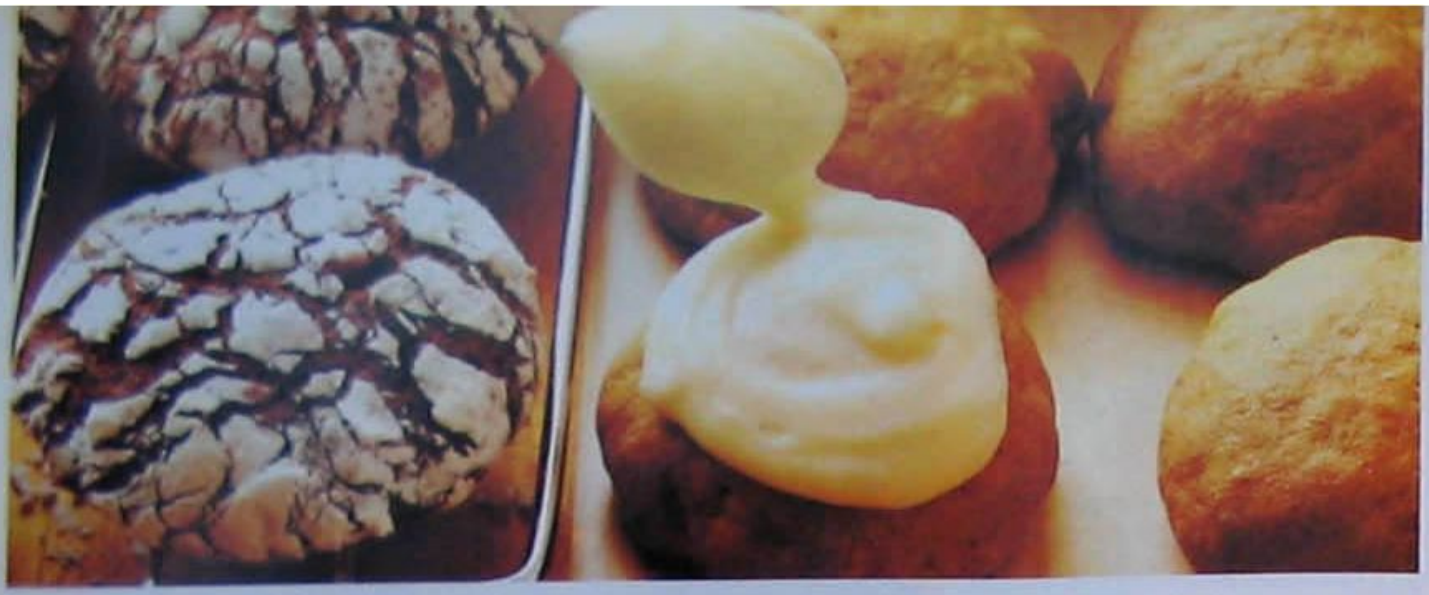
Standing time: 4 mins

45ml / 3tbls golden syrup
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz butter of margarine
225g / 8oz rolled oats *
pinch of salt

MAKES 8

1 Line the base of a shallow 23cm / 9in round dish with greaseproof paper or freezer tissue. Grease lightly.
2 Mix the syrup, sugar and butter or margarine in a 1L / 1¾pt bowl.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes (500 watts, 2½-3 minutes). Stir well until sugar has dissolved and mixture is smooth.
4 Stir in the oats and salt and spread evenly in the dish.
5 Microwave the mixture at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes (500 watts, 5-7 minutes), turning the dish every 30 seconds.
6 Remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 4 minutes to become firm.
7 Mark the warm biscuit into eight wedges, then leave to cool. Cut into eight pieces as marked.

* In Australia and New Zealand, use 2½ cups rolled oats.



Left: *Chocolate Cookies*
Right: *Spiced Puffs*

Spiced puffs

23 mins

Standing time: 18 mins

100g / 4oz sugar
75g / 3oz margarine
100g / 4oz golden syrup
60ml / 4tbls water
2.5ml / ½tsp instant coffee powder (optional)
3 eggs
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
450g / 1lb plain flour
icing sugar to dust or Orange Frosting (recipe page 343)

MAKES 48

1 In a mixing bowl, combine the sugar, margarine, syrup, water and coffee. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes (500 watts, 2-3 minutes), stirring after 2 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes.
2 Add all the remaining ingredients except the icing sugar or frosting and mix well. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for 6 hours or overnight to prevent spreading when cooked.
3 Shape the dough into 2.5cm / 1in balls.
4 Place six to eight balls in a ring on greaseproof paper or freezer tissue on the floor or turntable of the cooker.
5 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes (500 watts, 3-4 minutes), or until the surface is just dry, turning every 30 seconds. Remove the paper with the cookies on it. Leave for 3 minutes until the cookies become crisp, then transfer to a wire rack using a palette knife and leave to cool.
6 Repeat the procedure with the remaining mixture in five or six more batches.
7 Let cool, sprinkle with icing sugar or top with orange frosting.

Chocolate cookies

20 mins

Standing time: 18 mins

40g / 1½oz butter
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
225g / 8oz sugar
2 eggs
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
pinch of salt
225g / 8oz plain flour, sifted
50g / 2oz chopped nuts
icing sugar

MAKES 36

1 Place the butter and chocolate in a mixing bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-4 minutes until melted. Mix thoroughly until smooth.
2 Beat in the sugar, eggs, baking powder, vanilla flavouring and salt. Stir in the flour and nuts.
3 Wrap the mixture in cling film and refrigerate for 6 hours or overnight.
4 Shape the dough into 2.5cm / 1in balls and coat each one all over in icing sugar (see Cook's notes).
5 Place six to eight balls in a large circle on a piece of greaseproof paper or freezer tissue on the floor or turntable of the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes (500 watts, 2-3 minutes), or until the surface is just dry. Turn the cookies on the paper every 30 seconds.
6 Remove the paper with the cookies on it. Leave to stand for 3 minutes to crisp, then transfer them to a wire rack using a palette knife. Leave the cookies to cool completely.
7 Repeat the prodecure with the remaining cookies in five or six more batches.

Cook's notes

To coat the dough, first shape into 2.5cm / 1in balls, then roll in icing sugar to cover all over. It is important to refrigerate the dough overnight before shaping and using, otherwise the cookies will spread too much. If necessary, chill shaped and coated dough again before microwaving.

White fish fillets

Microwaving is one of the best ways to cook fish fillets. The fish is done so quickly that its delicate flavour is preserved and, with a little care, the texture will be perfect too.

When white fish fillets, such as cod, haddock, sole or plaice, are cooked in the microwave they stay moist and succulent, and the whole process takes only minutes. (An added bonus is that fish-cooking smells are almost eliminated.) Steaming and poaching are particularly successful techniques for fillets.

In steaming, the fish fillets cook gently in their own moisture without extra liquid. A little lemon juice, slivers of butter, grated lemon zest, herbs and pepper can be added for flavour. Salt, which dehydrates the fish and toughens the surface, should not be added; use a little at table, if you wish.

For poaching, the fish is cooked with a small amount of liquid (far less than in conventional poaching). The liquid may be water with lemon juice, milk, fish stock, white wine or a thin sauce. You can season poaching liquid with salt with no danger of drying the fish.

The microwaving time for both steaming and poaching is the same: allow 4-6 minutes per 450g / 1lb fillets at 100% (High). Fillets then need to stand while the thickest parts finish cooking; the fish will remain hot.

Cheesy Steamed Plaice

PETER KILEY

Cheesy steamed plaice

7¾ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
pinch of salt
175ml / 6fl oz milk
700g / 1½lb plaice fillets, in 4 portions
15g / ½oz butter
100g / 4oz Gruyère cheese, grated
paprika to dust

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a 575ml / 1pt jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until the butter has melted.
2 Stir in the flour and salt, then add the milk; whisk until smooth and set aside.
3 Put the plaice fillets in a shallow dish and dot with the butter. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, rearranging the fish once during cooking. Stand for 3 minutes.
4 Microwave the sauce at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, whisking twice. Blend in the cheese and any juices from cooking the fish; stir until the cheese has melted.
5 Spoon the sauce over the fish fillets and sprinkle with paprika. Garnish with parsley and fresh tomatoes, if liked.

VARIATION

For a more economical version of this recipe, use Cheddar, Emmental or Gouda cheese instead of the Gruyère.

How to microwave steamed fish fillets

Arrange *the fish fillets in a large dish with the thickest parts to the outside. Overlap the thinner areas in the centre of the dish. Dot with butter, sprinkle with lemon juice and season with pepper.*

Cover *with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for half cooking time (4-6 minutes per 450g / 1lb). Rearrange fillets. Cover and microwave for remainder of time. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.*

How to microwave poached fish fillets

Arrange *fillets in a large dish with the thickest parts to the outside. Season with pepper and herbs. Pour in liquid. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for half cooking time (4-6 minutes per 450g / 1lb).*

Rearrange *the fillets with the better cooked areas to the centre. Cover and finish microwaving. Test flakiness of fully cooked parts with a fork. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes to complete cooking.*

Cook's notes

It is important to avoid overcooking fish in the microwave as the flesh then becomes fibrous and chewy instead of being moist, tender and still firm. Microwave the fillets for the minimum time, then test thinner, opaque-looking areas with a fork — if the fish flakes easily it is ready to take out of the cooker. At the end of its standing time, the whole fillet should look opaque rather than translucent and will be perfectly cooked through.

If necessary wrap in foil to keep hot, or reheat in a sauce which will help keep the fish moist.

Slimmer's notes

Poached or steamed white fish fillets are an excellent choice for slimmers. Less calorific than oily fish, they can be microwaved without any extra fat but remain moist and appetizing. If you are diet-conscious, omit butter or margarine and avoid recipes with floury sauces. Simply sprinkle fillets with lemon juice, herbs and pepper. Serve with microwaved steamed vegetables for a nutritious and satisfying meal. For a special treat, substitute dry white wine for the lemon juice and flavour with tarragon or another delicate herb such as dill.

Nutty steamed haddock

8½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

45ml / 3tbls blanched almonds, coarsely chopped
15g / ½oz butter
700g / 1½lb haddock fillets, in 4 portions
15ml / 1tbls creamed horseradish
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place almonds and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring twice, until almonds are lightly coloured.
2 Drain the almonds and reserve the butter.
3 Arrange the haddock fillets, thickest parts to the outside, in a large shallow dish. Spread with the horseradish and season with pepper. Spoon over the reserved butter.
4 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes until fish flakes easily, rearranging fillets once.
5 Let stand for 3 minutes, then sprinkle with the almonds.

Nutty Steamed Haddock

VARIATION
Caribbean haddock: Substitute 30ml / 2tbls unsweetened coconut shreds for the almonds and microwave with the butter for 1-1½ minutes until golden. Spread fish with 30ml / 2tbls sieved mango chutney instead of horseradish.

Cod with parsley sauce

11¼ mins

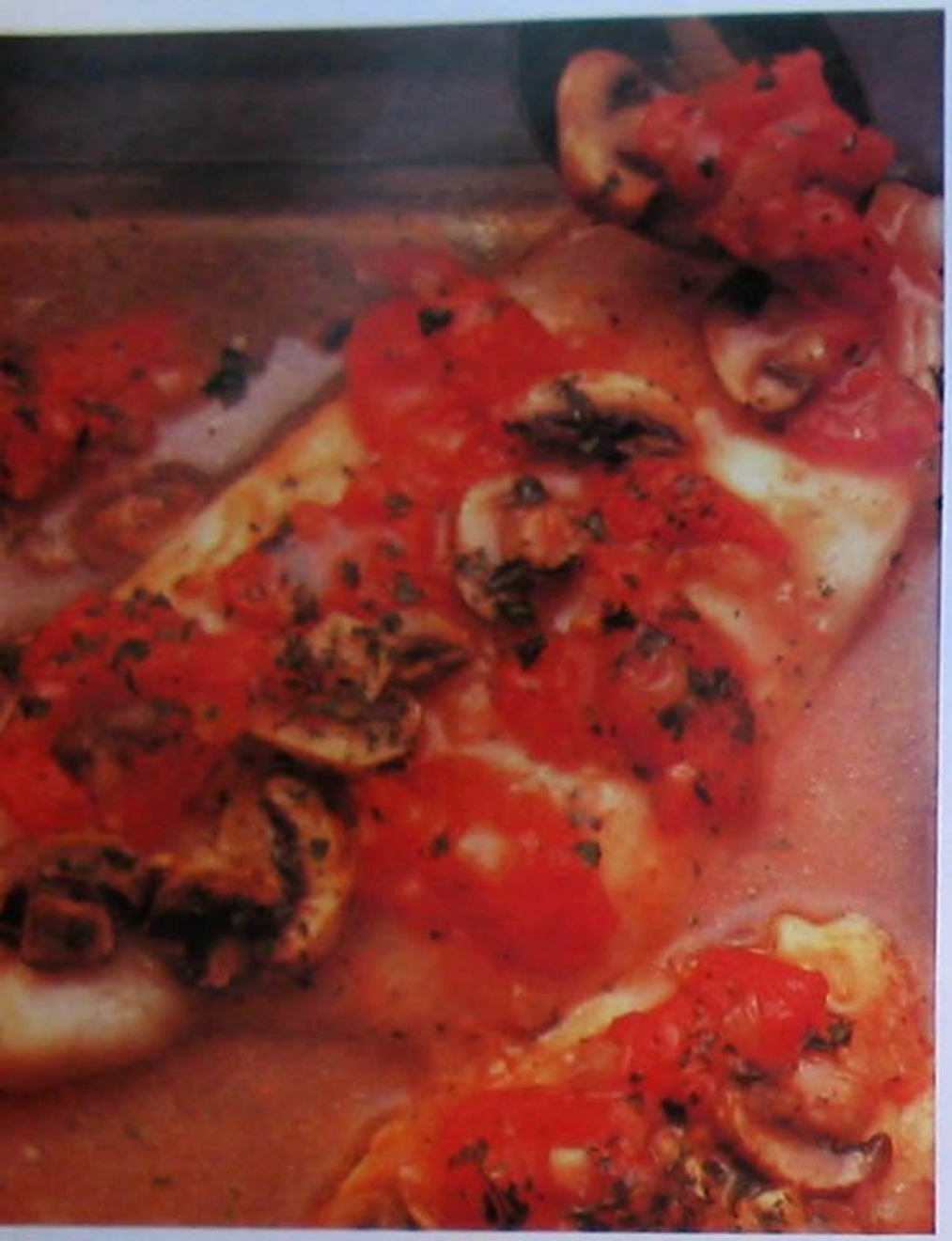
Standing time: 3 mins

25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
700g / 1½lb cod or haddock fillets, in 4 portions

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a 575ml / 1pt jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted.
2 Stir in flour, then whisk in milk. Add parsley and seasoning and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring every 1½ minutes. Cover and set aside.
3 Arrange fish in a large dish with the thickest parts to the outside. Cover with vented cling film.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, turning once and rearranging fish halfway through cooking. Let stand for 3 minutes.
5 Stir the parsley sauce, adding any fish juices. Microwave the sauce at 100% (High) for 1 minute to reheat, then serve with fish.

VARIATIONS
Curried sauce: add 2.5ml / ½tsp curry paste and 1.5ml / ¼tsp turmeric to jug with butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until butter has melted; stir well.
Blue cheese: beat 75g / 3oz crumbled blue cheese into the parsley sauce after cooking. Microwave at 100% (High) for a few seconds to melt.



Poached cod provençal

9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

15g / ½oz butter
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
½ onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
700g / 1½lb cod fillets, in 4 portions

SERVES 4

Above: *Poached Cod Provençal*
Right: *Poached Fish with Mushrooms*

1 Place the butter, mushrooms, onion and garlic in a large shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until onion has softened, stirring once.
2 Drain the tomatoes, discarding the juice. Add tomatoes to onion mixture with the lemon juice, ketchup, basil and seasoning.
3 Push the sauce to one side of the dish. Arrange the fish in the dish with the thickest parts to the outside. Spoon the sauce over the fish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, rearranging the fish once. Let stand for 3 minutes before serving.

Poached fish with mushrooms

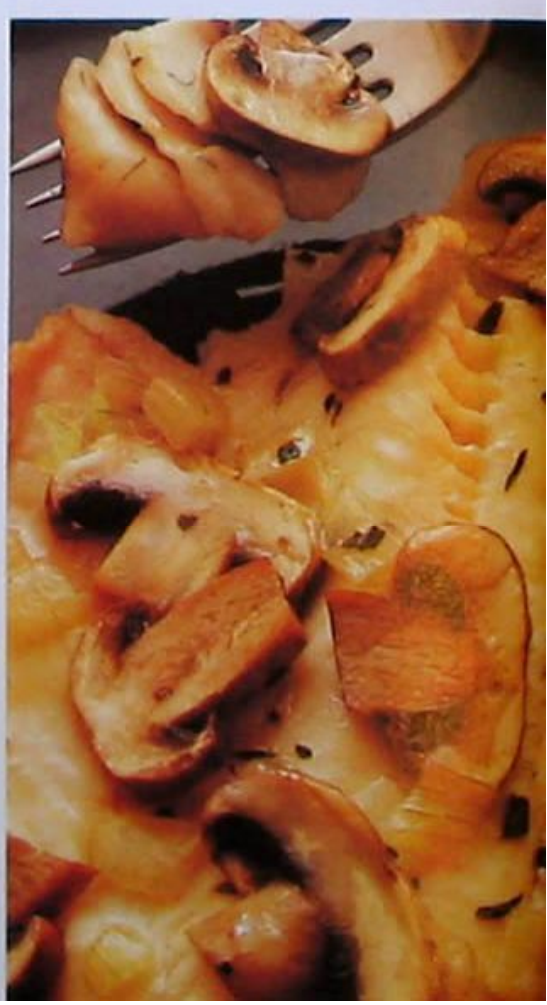
9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

2 shallots or 1 small onion, chopped
15g / ½oz butter
50ml / 2fl oz dry white wine
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper
700g / 1½lb white fish fillets, in 4 portions
50g / 2oz mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Place the shallots and butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until tender, stirring once.
2 Stir in the wine, tarragon and seasoning.
3 Arrange the fish fillets in a large shallow dish, with the thickest parts to the outside. Top with the mushrooms.
4 Spoon over the sauce. Microwave at 100% (High), covered, for 6-9 minutes until the fish flakes easily. Rearrange fillets and baste with sauce halfway through cooking. Let stand for 3 minutes.



Sole Florentine

13 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

In this classic dish, delicate sole fillets are steamed on a bed of well-seasoned spinach. Steaming spinach in the microwave is the ideal way to retain its fresh flavour.

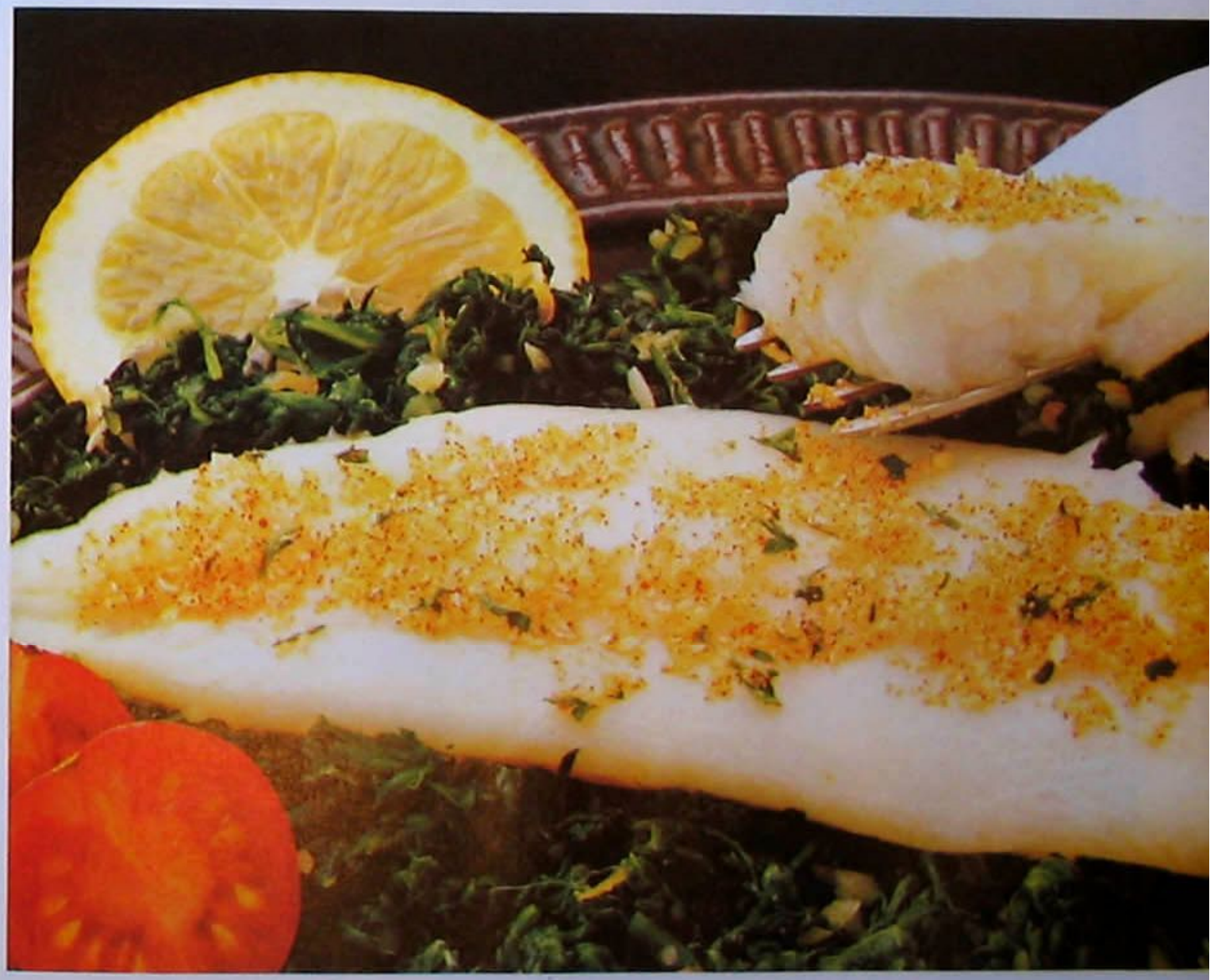
2 x 227g / 8oz packets frozen leaf spinach
½ onion, finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp grated lemon zest
25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbl whole-grain mustard
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb sole fillets
20ml / 4tsp grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika

SERVES 4

1 Make a small hole in the packets of frozen spinach and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until contents feel soft, shaking packets once. Empty spinach into a sieve and drain thoroughly.
2 Mix onion, lemon zest and 15g / ½oz butter in a large dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until tender; stir once.
3 Add mustard, seasoning and spinach; spread evenly over base.
4 Arrange fillets in one layer on top and dot with remaining butter.
5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, rearranging fish once during cooking.
6 Mix cheese, parsley and paprika. Sprinkle over fish and microwave, uncovered, for 2 minutes until fish flakes; stand 3 minutes.

Microtips

You can reheat cooked fish fillets in the microwave, but this needs care to ensure they do not become overdone. Blanketing the fillets with a sauce helps prevent loss of moisture. (If you do not have any sauce left over, remember you can create one in a matter of minutes in the microwave.) Cover the dish with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 70% (Medium-High): a 225g / 8oz fillet takes 2-4 minutes, depending on whether it is at room temperature or chilled.



Microwaving jelly preserves

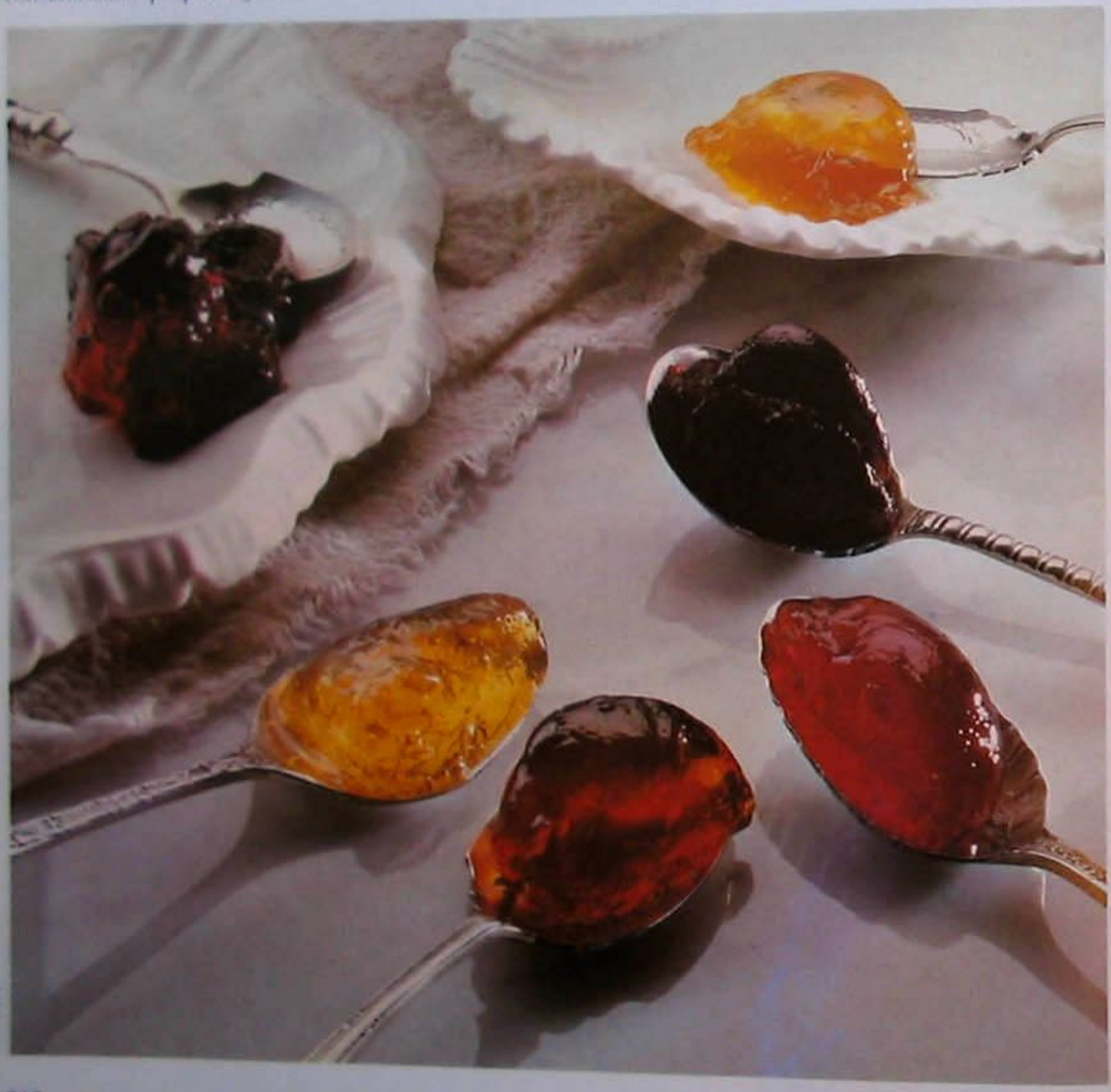
Home-made jellies are a joy to make with the microwave. Translucent and glowing with the colours of fresh fruit, they are the perfect accompaniment to many sweet and savoury dishes.

Home-made jelly preserves are colourful and clear. They can be made from a large range of fruit in season and as the microwave is ideal for making small quantities, mini-batches can be cooked without fuss. (Draining time is the same as for conventionally prepared jellies).

Preparation

Fruit should be just ripe for jelly-setting properties to be at their best. Avoid any that are damaged or bruised. Scrub or wash and dry harder fruits such as plums and apples and pick over soft fruits. Cut the fruit into pieces no larger than 2.5cm / 1in and mash it frequently during cooking. This helps release the natural pectin that sets preserves. Cores, skins and stalks are rich in pectin.

Top left clockwise: *Minty Blackcurrant Jelly; Spiced Apple Jelly; Blackcurrant Jelly; Redcurrant Jelly; Gooseberry Jelly; Lemon Jelly*



Setting
Low pectin fruits need lemon juice or citric acid added to help them set, or they may be cooked with a fruit, such as cooking apples, that sets easily. The flake and saucer tests are reliable once you are used to them. For an accurate test, use a microwave thermometer inside the cooker or conventional one outside and stop cooking when the temperature reaches 108°C / 225°F. It is important not to over-boil jelly as this spoils colour and flavour.

Flavouring and colouring
Mild flavoured fruits, such as apples, are improved with the addition of spices and herbs. Alternatively, combine fruits that complement each other, such as damson and apple and strawberry and raspberry.

Straining
You can buy jelly bags or make one with calico or triple thickness muslin. Simply suspend the bag over a large bowl to catch the juices. If the fruit is disturbed during straining it will cloud the jelly, so don't be tempted to hurry the process by pressing the fruit or squeezing the bag.

Potting
Small pots are traditional; they also look attractive and make welcome gifts. Sterilize the jars in the conventional way before potting. Leave the potted jelly undisturbed to cool, as movement during setting might spoil the texture and clarity. You can serve a jelly as soon as it is cold and set, but it will also keep well for up to 12 months in a cool, dark place.

Cook's notes

When potting jelly in small jars, remember that the ordinary waxed discs will be too big. To cut to size, fold in half, then half again, leaving a quarter shape (see step 9, page 648). Trim the rounded edge of this to the required size, open out and lay on the jelly surface to cover completely.

Redcurrant Jelly

Redcurrant jelly

47½ mins

Standing time: none

This preserve is traditionally served with roast lamb. It is also popular with croissants, crumpets or rolls and is often used to glaze fruit flans and gateaux. There is no need to remove the stalks.

900g / 2lb redcurrants
275ml / ½pt water
about 450g / 1lb sugar

MAKES 800g / 1¾lb

1 Put the currants with their stalks into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, mashing several times, until very soft.
2 Strain through the jelly bag (see step 3, page 648).
3 Warm the sugar and juice separately (see step 5). Stir the sugar into the juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes until setting point is reached (see step 7). Pot, seal and label (see steps 8-9).

VARIATION
Blackcurrant jelly: substitute 900g / 2lb blackcurrants for the redcurrants. Use 850ml / 1½pt water and 700g / 1½lb sugar. Prepare and microwave as for Redcurrant Jelly, microwaving for 25-30 minutes after adding sugar. Serve on hot buttered toast.

Minty Blackcurrant jelly: if liked, add six sprigs of mint to the blackcurrants during cooking to give the jelly a pleasant aromatic taste.

Gooseberry jelly

42½ mins

Standing time: none

This is a versatile jelly, which can be served with pork or chicken, or used as a glaze for sweet flans. The jelly can be coloured with a few drops of red colouring to make it a translucent orange-red.

900g / 2lb gooseberries
575ml / 1pt water
about 450g / 1lb sugar

MAKES 700g / 1½lb

1 Wash gooseberries and place in a large bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, mashing well with a wooden spoon twice to extract as much pectin as possible, until fruit is very soft.
2 Strain through the jelly bag (see step 3, page 648).
3 Warm the sugar and juice separately (see step 5). Stir the sugar into the juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes until setting point is reached (see step 7). Pot, seal and label (see steps 8-9).

How to microwave jelly preserves

Wash *and dry or pick over sound, just-ripe fruit. Chop all except soft fruits and place in a 4L / 7pt bowl with water, flavourings and lemon juice if using. Cover.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 15-30 minutes, depending on fruit, until mushy; mash regularly. If cooking hard and soft fruit together, part cook hard fruit first.*

Tip *the fruit and liquid into the jelly bag set above a bowl. Leave undisturbed to drain for 4-6 hours. Do not press fruit to speed draining or the jelly will be cloudy.*

Measure *the juice from the jelly bag into a jug, then weigh out the required amount of sugar, allowing 450g / 1lb sugar for each 575ml / 1pt of the drained juice.*

Place *the sugar in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes to warm. Microwave the juice in a large bowl at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir in sugar and colouring.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 20-30 minutes, stirring after 2-3 minutes to dissolve sugar. Add flavourings halfway through boiling. Test for setting after 10 minutes boiling.*

To test *for a set, lift wooden spoon above the bowl: the jelly should drop in flakes. Or, spoon jelly on to a cold saucer and push; it should wrinkle. Or, boil to 105°C / 225°F.*

Repeat *cooking and testing until ready. Using oven gloves, transfer the bowl to a board. Remove any scum and add extra colouring if necessary. Sterilize jars in the conventional way.*

Pour *jelly immediately into the jars to within 6mm / ¼in of the rim. Leave to cool. Cut a waxed disc to size and lay, wax-side down, on the surface. Seal with cellophane covers, then label.*

Mint jelly

40½ mins

Standing time: none

This is the traditional accompaniment to lamb; it is also good with curries and mackerel.

900g / 2lb cooking apples
large bunch fresh mint
575ml / 1pt water
275ml / ½pt white wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
about 450g / 1lb sugar
green colouring

MAKES 450g / 1lb

1 Wash apples and mint. Cut up the apples, including the cores. Finely chop 20-30ml / 1½-2tbls mint and reserve.
2 Place the apples, mint leaves, water, vinegar and lemon juice in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, mashing until apples are pulpy.
3 Strain through a jelly bag. Measure strained juice and calculate sugar required (see step 4, opposite).
4 Warm sugar and juice separately (see step 5). Stir sugar and colouring into juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 13-16 minutes, until setting point is reached (see step 7 opposite), added the reserved mint halfway through boiling.
5 Pot, seal and label as directed (see steps 8-9 opposite).

Spiced apple jelly

47½ mins

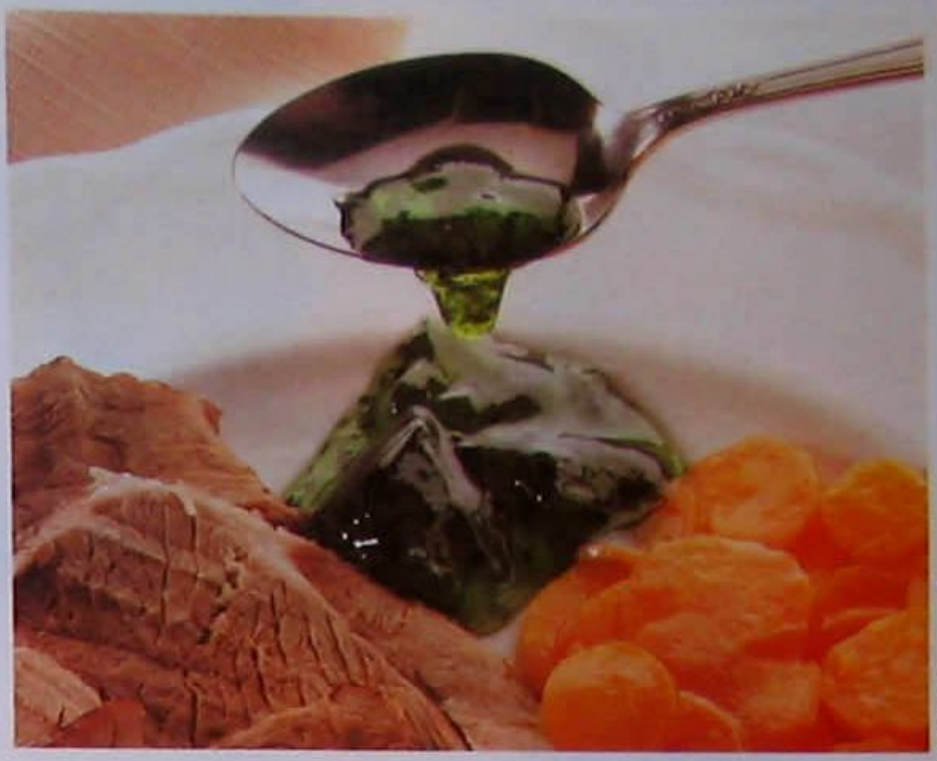
Standing time: none

Serve with pork, ham or sausages, or on hot buttered toast.

900g / 2lb cooking apples
thinly pared rind of ½ orange
575ml / 1pt water
10 whole cloves
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
about 450g / 1lb sugar

MAKES 800g / 1¾lb

1 Wash, dry and chop the apples. Place in a large bowl with the rind, water, cloves and lemon juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, mashing until pulpy. Strain through a jelly bag (see step 3, opposite).
2 Warm the sugar and juice separately (see step 5). Stir in the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes until setting point is reached (see step 7).
3 Pot, seal and label (see steps 8-9).



Mint Jelly

Cook's notes

For a richer colour, add a few drops of orange colouring. For a spicier jelly, add some cinnamon sticks with the cloves.

Lemon jelly

60½ mins

Standing time: none

This jelly has a mellow citrus flavour. It is delicious with toast or croissants, or as a filling for cakes and pastries.

3 large lemons
1.1L / 2pt * water
about 500g / 1¼lb sugar

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Scrub and dry the lemons. Thinly pare the rind and shred. Cut up the pith and flesh, retaining the juice. Place all in a large bowl together with the water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes, mashing several times, until the rind is very soft.
3 Strain through the jelly bag (see step 3, opposite). Reserve some of the shredded rind to add to the jelly, if liked.
4 Warm the sugar and juice separately (see step 5). Stir the sugar into the juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-20 minutes, until setting point is reached (see step 7). Add the reserved rind halfway through boiling, if liked.
5 Pot, seal and label (see steps 8-9).

VARIATION

Parslied lemon jelly: Add 50g / 2oz washed and dried parsley to the lemons before cooking. Add few drops of green colouring to the juice with the sugar. Stir in 30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley halfway through boiling. Serve with fish or ham dishes.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 4½ cups water.

Microwave plus fryer and hob

Microwave cooking is about speed and ease, but there are certain jobs it cannot do. Use a conventional deep-fat fryer and hob with your microwave and you will get the best of both worlds.

The microwave can cope with most cooking tasks, but it does have certain limitations: it is not suitable for deep-fat frying, or for boiling eggs. In these cases, it makes sense to use the microwave with other appliances.

Microwave plus deep-fat fryer: never attempt to deep fry food in the microwave — microwave energy reacts with a large volume of fat, causing small internal explosions. It is also difficult to control the temperature. Use a conventional deep-fat fryer to make chips or fritters to accompany microwaved dishes and sauces.

Deep-fat fryers vary in size but never fill any pan more than one-third full of oil as it bubbles up when food is added. Always heat the oil gently as rapid or overheating affects the oil's quality.

Microwave plus hob: you can use the conventional cooker with the microwave in a variety of ways. Cook pasta or rice on your hob while you microwave a sauce for quick preparation. Seal meat for a stew on the hob to achieve the traditional rich flavour, then transfer to the microwave to finish.

Cheesy Broccoli Fritters

Guidelines for deep-fat frying

- *Fill pan only one-third full with oil.*
- *Use oil with a high smoke point: olive, vegetable, corn and sunflower.*
- *Use a deep-frying thermometer to check temperatures. A cube of day-old bread will brown in 40 seconds at 220°C / 430°F, 50 seconds at 190°C / 375°F, 60 seconds at 180° / 355°F, 75 seconds at 170°C / 340°F.*
- *Re-use oil up to 10 times. Strain cooled oil through a sieve lined with absorbent paper, then bottle.*

Cheesy broccoli fritters

4 mins

Deep-fat frying time: 2½ mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz broccoli florets, stalks trimmed
30ml / 2tbls water
45ml / 3tbls seasoned plain flour
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt milk
oil for deep frying

BATTER
100g / 4oz plain flour
salt
1 small egg, lightly beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk

SERVES 4

How to reheat deep-fried fritters

Place the deep-fried fritters on a plate; microwave at 70% (Medium High) for 1-1½ minutes for 3 pieces, 2-2½ minutes for 6 pieces. Test to see if they are heated through by feeling the plate under the food every minute to check if it is warm. Reheated deep-fried food is not especially crisp, but very tasty served with a microwaved sauce or dip.

How to make Cheesy broccoli fritters

Put *broccoli florets and water into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until just tender. Stir once.*

Drain *the florets and dry thoroughly on absorbent paper. Shake the vegetables in the flour to coat. Slice the cheese very thinly.*

Microwave *the cornflour, cheese and milk at 50% (Medium) for 1½-3 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds, until smooth and creamy.*

Dip *broccoli florets in cheese mixture until coated. (Reserve the seasoned flour.) Arrange on a tray lined with greaseproof paper or cling film. If necessary, soften the cheese mixture at 50% (Medium) for 10-15 seconds. Chill the florets for 30 minutes.*

Make *the batter: sift flour with a pinch of salt into a bowl. Add the egg and gradually mix in the milk with a fork or wire whisk to make a thick, smooth batter. Cover and chill for 20 minutes. Heat 5-7cm / 2-3in oil in a deep-fat fryer on the hob to 190°C / 375°F.*

Mould *cheese mixture firmly around florets and toss each in reserved seasoned flour. Dip in batter to coat evenly. Deep fry in batches of three or four at a time for 30-45 seconds, until golden, turning several times. Drain on absorbent paper and serve hot.*

Fish and chips

9 mins

Deep-fat frying time: 10 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

Use the microwave with the deep-fat fryer to make succulent fish and crispy chips for a traditional family supper.

4 × 175-225g / 6-8oz thick cod or haddock fillets
450-700g / 1-1½lb potatoes, cut into 6mm / ¼in thick chips
oil for deep-fat frying
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
20ml / 4tsp lemon juice
20ml / 4tsp bottled brown sauce
2 firm tomatoes, halved, to garnish
8 thin lemon slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Pour enough oil into a deep-fat fryer to come one-third of the way up the sides. Heat gently to 180°C / 355°F.
2 Rinse the prepared chips in cold water and dry thoroughly on absorbent paper or on a clean cloth.
3 Put the chips into the wire basket and lower into the hot oil. Fry for 10-12 minutes until well browned, then lift out the basket and tip the chips on to absorbent paper to drain.
4 Meanwhile, put the butter or margarine in a large, shallow microwave dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the butter is very hot and bubbling.
5 Put the fish, skin side up, into the hot butter, then turn them over so they are skin side down in the dish.
6 Mix together the lemon juice and brown sauce and spoon over the fish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until the fish flakes easily, re-arranging the fillets once.
7 Transfer fish to serving dish, cover and stand for 4 minutes.
8 Meanwhile, microwave the cooking juices, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until thickened and reduced.
9 Arrange the fish and chips on individual serving plates. Garnish with a tomato half and lemon slices and spoon the thickened sauce over the fish to serve.

Cook's notes

For extra crisp chips, fry the chips for 8-9 minutes until nearly browned, then remove the chips in the basket from the fat until serving time. Return them to the hot fat for 2-3 minutes to complete browning and crisping and serve them fresh and hot.

Fish and Chips

Eggs Florentine

14¼ mins

Hob cooking time: 7 mins

Standing time: none

You cannot boil eggs in the microwave, so cook the eggs on the hob for this dish and the sauce and spinach in the microwave.

4 large or 6 small eggs
700g / 1½lb fresh spinach, tough stalks trimmed

SAUCE
375ml / 13fl oz milk
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
37.5ml / 2½tbls plain flour
100g / 4oz Edam or Cheddar cheese, grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp made English mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the eggs in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil on the conventional hob, then lower the heat and simmer gently for 7-8 minutes. Drain and run under cold water to stop cooking.
2 While the eggs are cooking, make the sauce. Microwave the milk, uncovered in a jug at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until hot. Melt the butter or margarine in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.
3 Stir the flour into the butter, then gradually whisk in the hot milk. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking three or four times until sauce is boiling and thickened.
4 Stir in 75g / 3oz of the cheese, the mustard and seasoning. Cover the surface of the sauce with cling film to prevent a skin forming.
5 Wash the spinach well in cold water. Shake off the water, then put the spinach into a large bowl.
6 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until the spinach is tender, stirring twice. Drain thoroughly, then chop roughly. Season to taste.
7 Spread most of the spinach in a buttered 20cm / 8in round dish. Shell and halve the eggs and arrange, cut side down, on top.
8 Swirl the remaining spinach through the sauce to add colour to the dish, then pour over the eggs. Sprinkle with the rest of the cheese. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.

VARIATIONS
If fresh spinach is not available use 330g / 10.6oz frozen leaf spinach. Microwave in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, stirring once, until tender. Drain, chop and season. Proceed as above.

Family Beef Casserole

Family beef casserole

55 mins

Hob cooking time: 10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
600g / 1¼lb stewing steak, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
2 small onions, sliced
1 celery stalk, chopped
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
good pinch of sugar
575ml / 1pt beef stock
pepper
2 potatoes, cut into eighths
3-4 carrots, thinly sliced

SERVES 4

1 Using half the oil, fry the meat in a frying pan on the hob until browned all over. Transfer to a microwave casserole.
2 Brown the onions and celery in the remaining oil. Thoroughly mix in the flour and sugar, then stir in the stock and pepper.
3 Bring to the boil; pour over meat. Add potatoes and carrots.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until boiling, then reduce to 50% (Medium) and cook for 50-60 minutes, until the meat is tender, stirring three times. Stand for 5 minutes.

STAR RECIPE

Chocolate tipsy cake

Want to bake a cake in just six minutes? This light, brandy-flavoured creation will do you and your microwave credit on both formal and informal occasions.

Chocolate cakes are always popular especially when they are as deliciously light-textured as this one cooked in the microwave.

A heatable pudding basin is used, instead of a baking dish. This does not need lining and enables you to turn out the cake with ease. Covering the basin with absorbent paper while the mixture cooks holds in heat but allows steam to escape. This way the cake does not taste like a steamed pudding. When done, the cake shrinks slightly from the sides of the basin.

Serve this versatile treat at tea-time or as an elegant dessert.

Chocolate tipsy cake

6 mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz self-raising flour
60ml / 4tbls cocoa
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
60ml / 4tbls ground almonds
few drops vanilla flavouring
2 eggs, lightly beaten
30ml / 2tbls hot water

SYRUP
15ml / 1tbls instant coffee
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt water
30ml / 2tbls brandy

DECORATION
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
caster sugar, to taste
2.5ml / ½tsp drinking chocolate
a few blackberries
crystallized violets
sliced kiwi fruit

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

Take care not to overbeat the cake mixture or the cake may not rise well.

Boilable non-stick pudding basins, used for steaming puddings conventionally, are microwave safe. If you don't have one, use an ovenproof glass pudding basin and line it with cling film.

This rich cake-cum-pudding is excellent served as a dessert with fresh fruit, at teatime, or served Viennese-style with coffee.

Freezer notes

Cool the cake in basin but do not add syrup. Wrap and freeze for up to six months. To thaw: unwrap basin, cover with absorbent paper; microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes; stand 5 minutes. Pour over syrup, refrigerate and decorate as desired.

How to microwave Chocolate tipsy cake

Sift *the flour and cocoa into a bowl, add the butter or margarine, soft brown sugar, almonds, vanilla flavouring, eggs and hot water. Beat for 1 minute until blended.*

Spoon *the mixture into a 1.1l. / 2pt basin and smooth level. Rest a sheet of absorbent paper over top of basin. Stand in the microwave on an upturned saucer.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, turning after 2 minutes. To test, pierce centre of cake with cocktail stick; it should come out clean. Leave the cake to cool.*

Stir *coffee and caster sugar into the water in a measuring jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute. Cool, then stir in the brandy.*

Pour *the coffee syrup over the cake in the basin. Refrigerate, covered, for at least 1 hour. Turn out cake (loosening with a knife if necessary) on to a serving plate.*

Whip *the cream and sweeten to taste. Spread over the cake and, if liked, pipe rosettes. Dust with drinking chocolate and decorate with blackberries, violets and sliced kiwi fruit.*

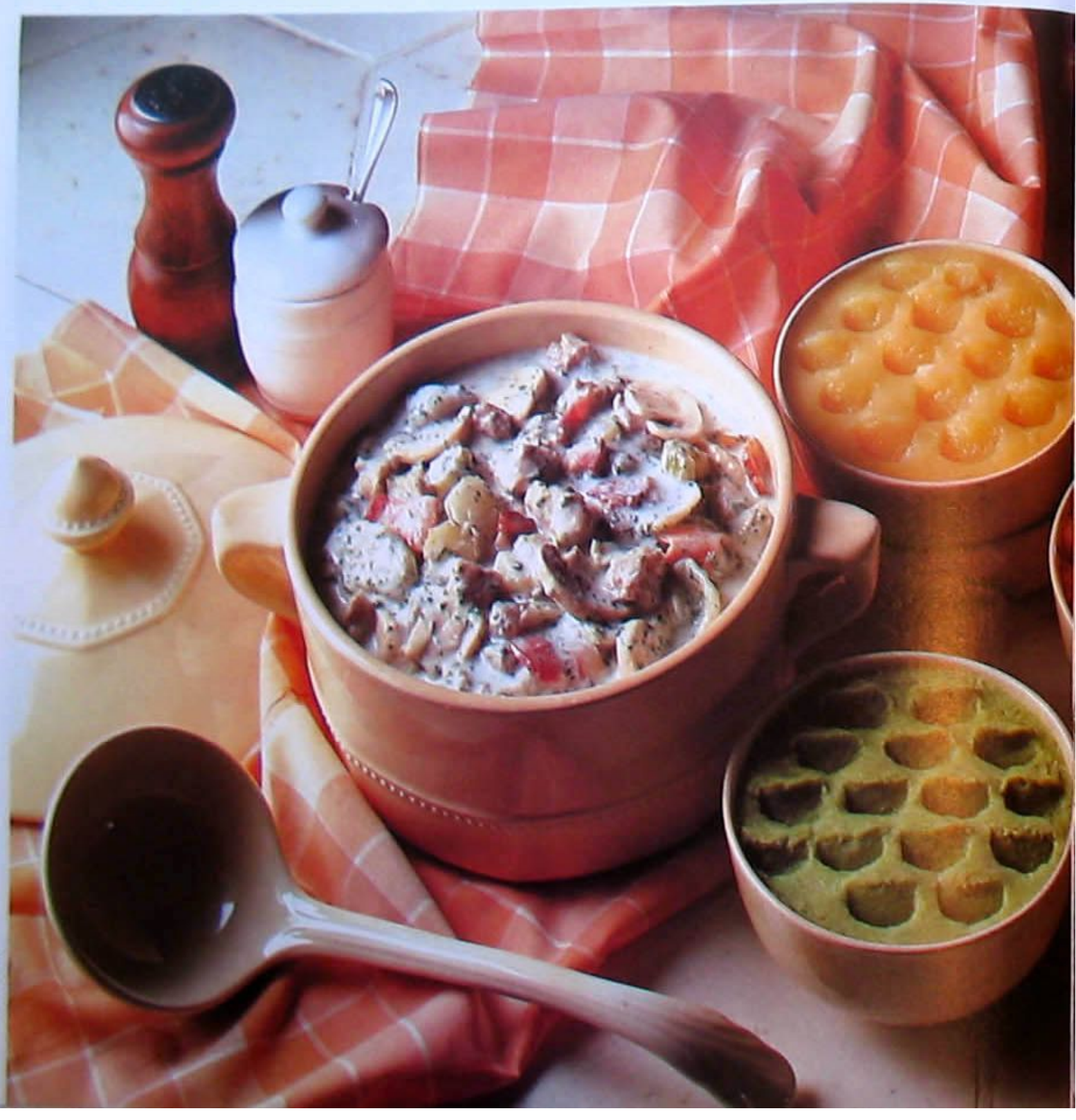
Dinner on a shoestring

Catering on a tight budget needn't strain the ingenuity — delicious dishes can be microwaved from simple, well-flavoured ingredients. Not all the best things in life are free, but many are inexpensive!

Cost-conscious entertaining doesn't mean that food has to be unexciting. With imagination and the help of your microwave, attractive, nourishing dishes can be prepared without breaking the bank.

You don't have to cut corners either — simply substitute inexpensive ingredients for more extravagant ones. Single cream can be replaced by milk, butter by margarine and costly imported fruit and vegetables by the best of what is in season.

Appearance is important too — a well presented dish with thought given to colour, shape and appeti-

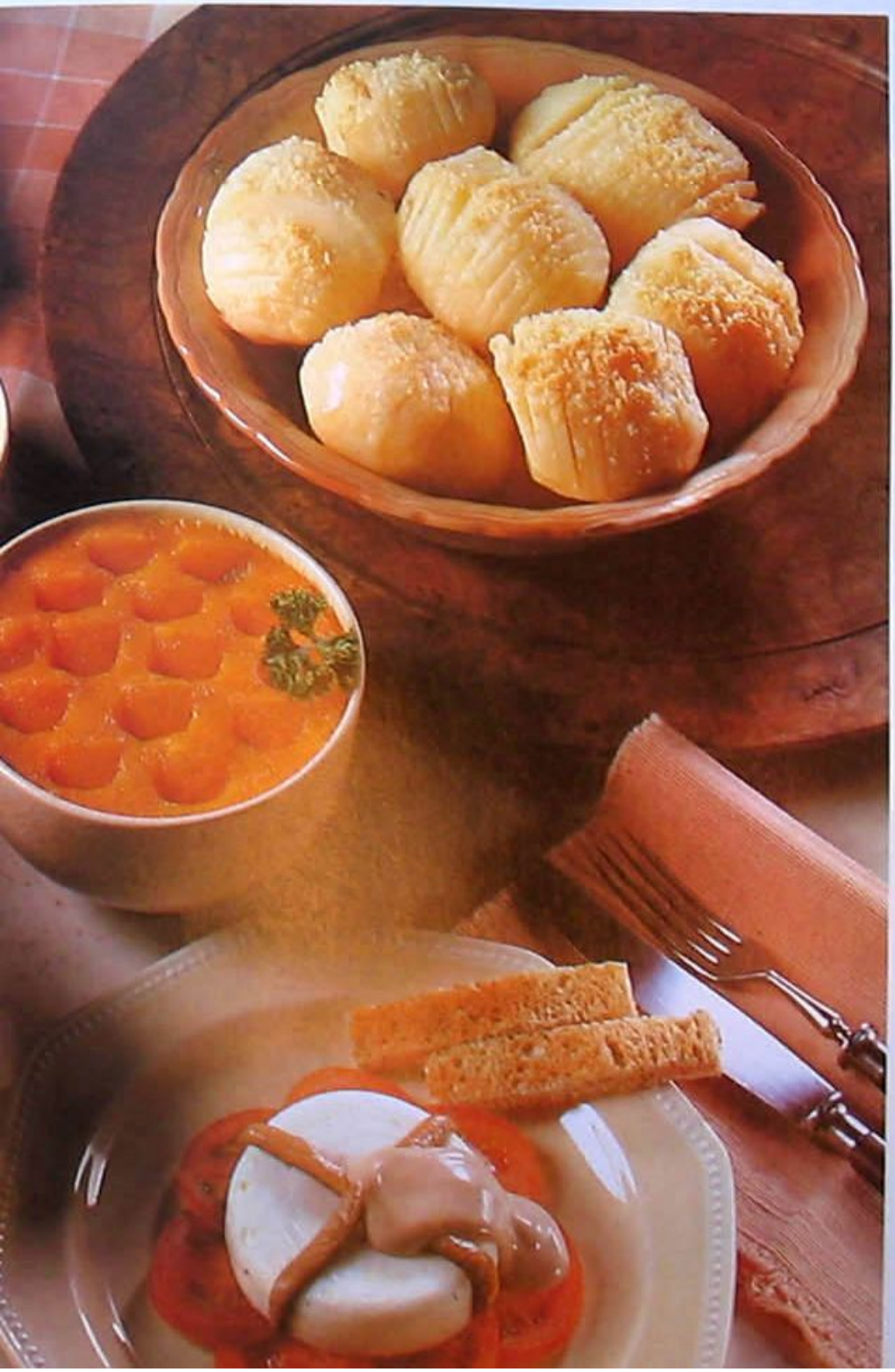


zing textures will look so good no-one would dream that you were cooking on a budget.

Base savoury dishes on the better-value protein foods, such as eggs, or the less expensive cuts of meat. It is a false economy to buy the very cheapest meat, as it will probably give inferior results — spending just a little more will prove well worthwhile and, in the long run, cuts down on waste.

It's always sensible to make use of seasonal vegetables and fruit — and cook them to perfection in the microwave. In this menu, three deliciously different-tasting vegetables are served in purée form, with crisp fantail potatoes to make a really filling meal.

The dip for the dessert should not be cooked in advance as it does not reheat well, but it is quickly and easily microwaved from the basic ingredients between courses. Take care when preparing the fruit for dipping, that you coat all cut edges with lemon juice. Soft-textured fruit such as bananas are best prepared at the last minute.



MENU

Anchovy Eggs
Served with tomatoes and toast

Blanquette of Rabbit
Rabbit in a creamy white sauce

Three-colour Vegetables
Puréed sprouts, carrots and swedes

Fantail Potatoes
Flavoured with garlic and Parmesan

Hot Fruit Dip
Served with best seasonal fruit

SERVES 4

Countdown

The day before
Prepare and microwave the blanquette. Cover, allow to cool, then store in the refrigerator overnight.

Three hours before the meal
Microwave and purée the vegetables and set aside, covered. Microwave the potatoes. Assemble the Anchovy Eggs in ramekins and arrange the tomatoes on plates.

Measure out dip ingredients. Prepare the fruit and coat with lemon juice.

Half-an-hour before the meal
Microwave the blanquette straight from the refrigerator at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes to reheat, stirring several times. Make the toast and microwave the Anchovy Eggs and tomatoes. Serve with toast. Microwave potatoes at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Brown under the grill. Microwave vegetables for 2-3 minutes.

While clearing main course
Microwave the dip and serve it hot with the prepared fruit.

Anchovy eggs

5 mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs
4 tomatoes, sliced in rings
45ml / 3tbls milk
pepper
5ml / 1tsp anchovy essence or sauce
4 anchovy fillets, halved lengthways
1 lemon, cut in wedges
fingers of buttered toast, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Break an egg into each of four small greased ramekins. Prick the yolks with a cocktail stick.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes until the whites are almost cooked. Set aside.
3 Arrange the tomato slices overlapping in a ring in the centre of each of four side plates. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until hot.
4 Turn an egg out on to each ring of tomatoes. Mix the milk, pepper and anchovy essence and spoon over the eggs. Arrange two strips of anchovy in a cross on each egg.
5 Garnish with lemon wedges and serve with toast.

How to turn out Anchovy eggs

Loosen the eggs in the ramekins by running a palette knife around the edge. Invert quickly over the centre of tomatoes and lift off ramekin.

Blanquette of rabbit

34 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 smoked streaky bacon rashers, cut in 12mm / ½in pieces
2 small onions, quartered
225g / 8oz Jerusalem artichokes, sliced
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb frozen boneless diced rabbit, thawed *
275ml / ½pt stock
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
150ml / ¼pt natural yogurt
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley

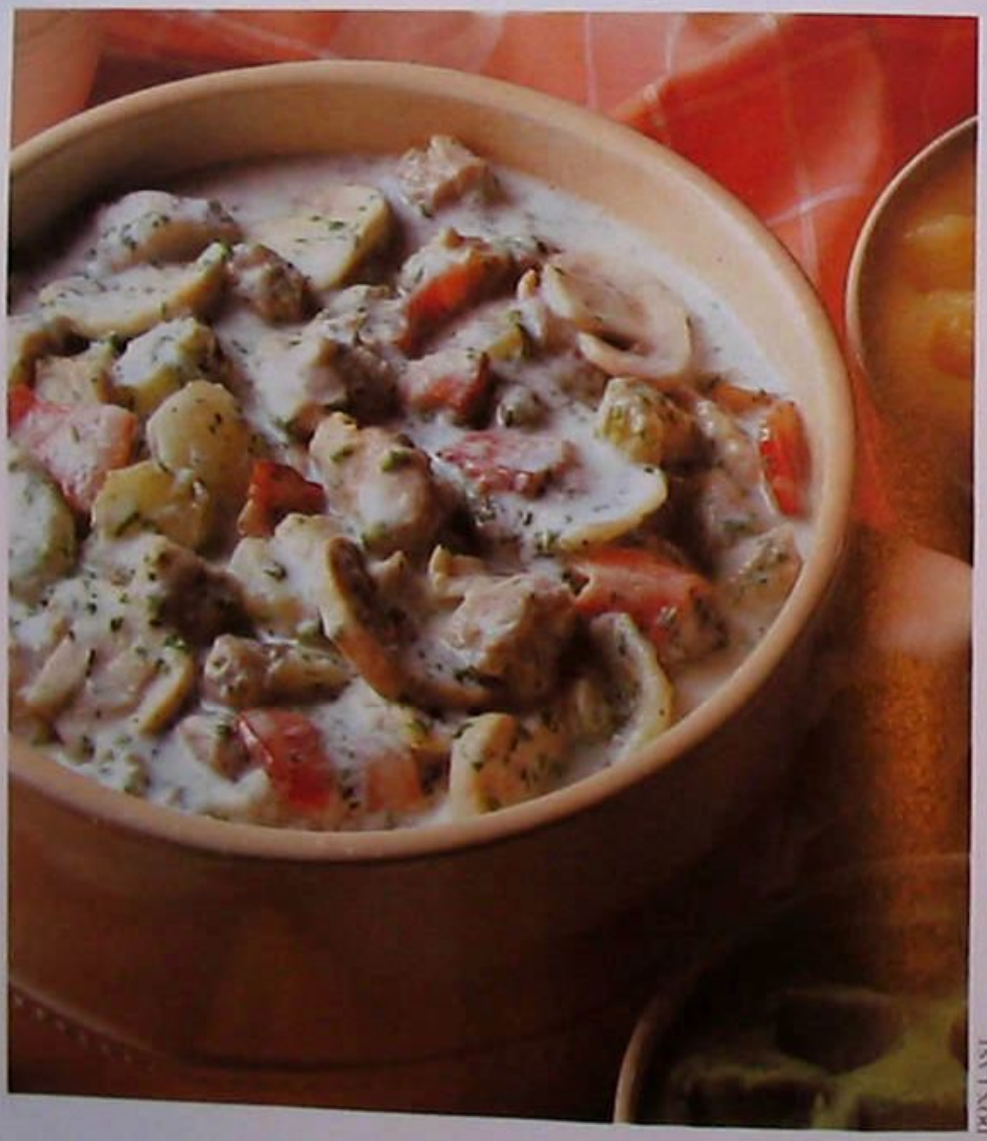
SERVES 4

1 Place the bacon in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Remove the bacon using a slotted spoon and set aside.
3 Add the onion and artichoke to the bacon fat in the bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes until tender.
4 Season the flour with salt and pepper to taste. Toss the rabbit in the flour to coat, then stir in with the vegetables.
5 Stir in stock, lemon juice and zest and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 15 minutes.
6 Add the mushrooms and bacon and microwave at 50% (Medium) for a further 5 minutes.
7 Stir in yoghurt and parsley. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.

VARIATION
If preferred, substitute chicken meat for the rabbit.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use boned fresh rabbit pieces.

Blanquette of Rabbit



Fantail potatoes

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 potatoes (about 75-100g / 3-4oz each), peeled
45ml / 3tbls water
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil
salt
1 garlic clove, crushed
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Slice each potato at 3mm / ⅛in intervals, cutting almost to the base. Take care not to cut too close to the base or the potatoes will break.
2 Place the potatoes in a dish with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, rearranging the potatoes occasionally during cooking so that they will cook evenly.
3 Leave covered to stand for 5 minutes. Mix the oil, salt and garlic together and brush between the slices of potato, separating them out with a knife and taking care not to break the potatoes.
4 Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and either crisp briefly in a pre-heated conventional oven (190°C / 375°F / Gas 5) for 2-3 minutes, or brown under a hot grill.

Three-colour vegetables

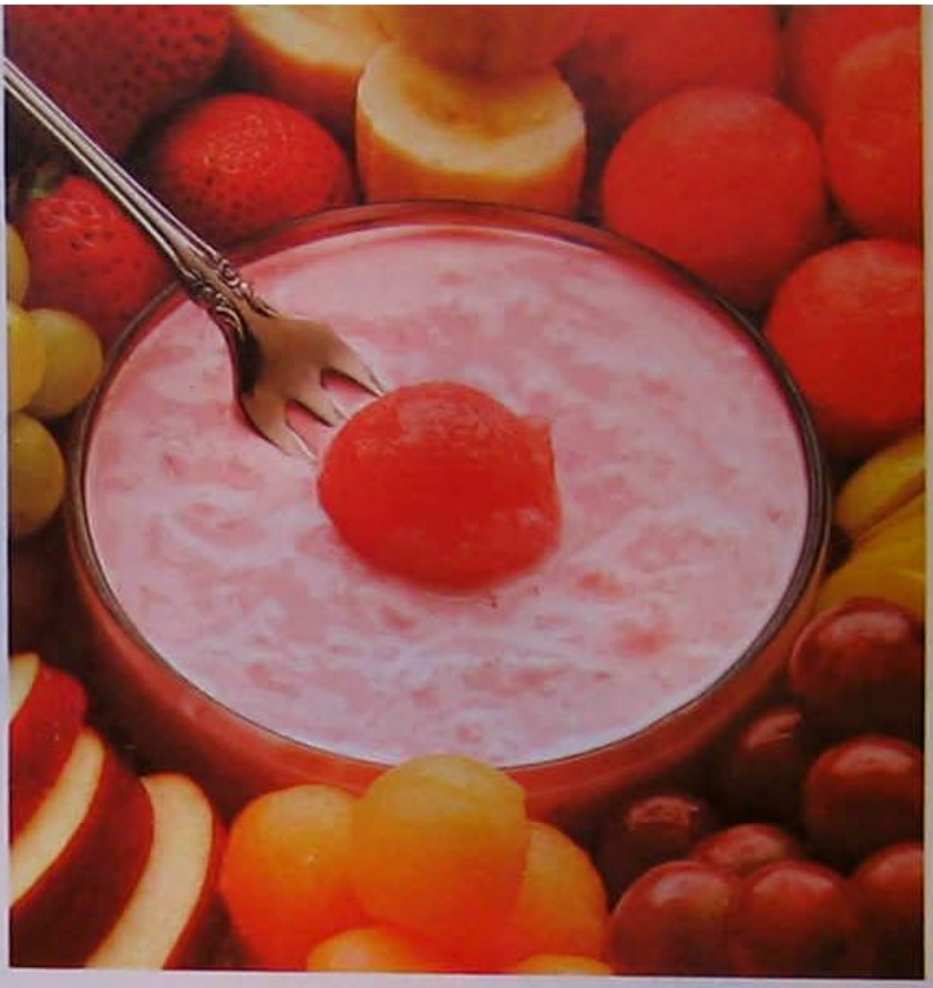
24 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

350g / 12oz Brussels sprouts
575ml / 1pt boiling water
350g / 12oz swede or turnip, cut in cubes
350g / 12oz carrots, thinly sliced
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the sprouts in a bowl with 90ml / 6tbls of the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2 Set aside to stand for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, place the swede in another bowl with half the remaining water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring once or twice, until soft. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Place the carrots in a third bowl, add the remaining water and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until soft. Stand for 5 minutes.
4 Add 25g / 1oz of butter or margarine and 90ml / 6tbls boiling water to each of the vegetables and purée separately in a food processor, vegetable mill or sieve. Season.
5 Arrange the three purées in warmed serving dishes. If necessary, microwave each at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds to re-heat.
6 Mark the tops decoratively with a knife and serve immediately.



Hot Fruit Dip

Cook's notes

When processing the Three-colour Vegetables to a purée, you may find it is necessary to add more liquid than is used in the recipe. This could be added in the form of extra butter or margarine, or a little milk or stock. Take care, however, not to add too much liquid.

Hot fruit dip

4 mins

Standing time: none

150g / 5oz pink marshmallows
45ml / 3tbls desiccated coconut
60ml / 4tbls redcurrant jelly
60ml / 4tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
fresh fruit in season for dipping — apples and pears, banana chunks, strawberries, grapes or melon balls
extra lemon juice for coating

SERVES 4

1 Combine the marshmallows, coconut, jelly, milk and 5ml / 1tsp lemon juice in a bowl.
2 Prepare the fruit according to type and coat all cut surfaces with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Arrange on a serving dish and cover until needed.
3 Microwave the dip ingredients at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes, then again just before serving.
4 Serve hot with the fruit. Provide forks or cocktail sticks for spearing and dunking the pieces of fruit.

Speedy supper dishes

When you need to dish up an appetizing family supper in double-quick time, the clever cook uses the microwave together with items from the store-cupboard, fridge or freezer.

Many tasty dishes can be created at only a few moments' notice, with the help of the microwave, a well stocked larder, fridge and freezer and a little imagination.

Let's face it, we're almost spoilt for choice with the vast range of excellent convenience foods now available — in cans or packets; fresh, chilled or frozen, and including exotic items as well as basics. Convenience foods are invaluable when it comes to easy preparation and the microwave ensures successful speedy results. Put the two together and you are able to produce a wide range of delicious dishes.

Red Bean Beef Pot

Red bean beef pot

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

3 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, thinly sliced
225g / 8oz lean minced beef
300g / 10.6oz can cream of tomato soup
425g / 15oz can red kidney beans
15ml / 1tbls chilli sauce
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
good pinch of cayenne pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp brown sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Hasty Ham and Broccoli Rolls

Hasty ham and broccoli rolls

13 mins

Standing time: none

22g / ¾oz packet onion sauce mix
300ml / ½pt milk
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz packet frozen broccoli spears
8 slices processed cheese
16 thin, square slices ham

SERVES 4

1 Put the sauce mix into a bowl and whisk in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, whisking several times, until cooked. Gradually whisk in the fat, then add lemon juice and seasoning. Cover and set aside.
2 Pierce the packet of broccoli and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until spears can be separated easily. Drain well.
3 Sandwich a slice of cheese between two slices of ham. Place two broccoli spears at one end of each ham and cheese 'sandwich' and roll up neatly. Repeat with the remaining cheese, ham and broccoli to make eight rolls in total. Arrange in a 30 x 20cm / 12 x 8in dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes; rotate dish once until cheese melts.
4 Pour over sauce and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-4 minutes until heated through. Serve with hot buttered toast.

How to microwave Red bean beef pot

Mix *the celery, onion, and beef together in a casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, stirring several times until the vegetables are tender. Drain off fat and stir well to break up the meat.*

Stir *in the soup, drained kidney beans, sauces, cayenne, sugar and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 9-10 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes. Serve with crackers or crusty bread, if liked.*

Freezer notes

You may prefer to buy frozen broccoli, in economy packs, in which case, simply place the amount required (225g / 8oz) in a bowl and add 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes. Separate the spears, then drain well and follow instructions given from step 3 onwards. The broccoli liquid can be reserved, to use when making soups and gravies.

Prawn Creole

13½ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
1 onion, finely chopped
3 spring onions, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
60ml / 4tbls tomato purée
425g / 15oz can tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp cayenne pepper
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper
375g / 12oz peeled prawns
450g / 1lb boiled rice, cooked conventionally, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Put butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Mix in the flour, onion, spring onion, celery, pepper and garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Add the remaining ingredients, except prawns and rice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring several times until thickened. Remove bay leaves.
3 Stir in the prawns and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Serve with boiled rice.

Freezer notes

If using frozen prawns, thaw at 30% (Low) for 5-6 minutes. Drain well on absorbent paper before adding to the sauce and following instructions in step 3.

Snappy tuna macaroni

7 mins

Standing time: none

2 hard-boiled eggs
100g / 4oz quick cooking macaroni *
198g / 7oz can tuna, drained
290g / 10.2oz can cream of chicken soup
150ml / 5fl oz evaporated milk
1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls malt vinegar
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Shell and slice the eggs; reserve a few slices, chop remainder. In a large casserole, mix together the eggs, macaroni, tuna, soup, milk, onion, vinegar, parsley, seasoning.
2 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring two or three times. Garnish with the reserved egg slices and serve hot with crusty bread and salad.

Snappy tuna macaroni for two: halve quantities of ingredients. To save using only half a can of tuna and soup, omit the evaporated milk and use a full can of soup and a small 99g / 3½oz can tuna. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use normal macaroni; half-cook before microwaving as instructed.

Crab toasts

5½ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt single cream
45ml / 3tbls dry white wine
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
2 egg yolks, lightly beaten
175g / 6oz can crabmeat, rinsed and drained
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
8 small slices wholemeal bread, toasted and cut in triangles

SERVES 4

1 Put butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in the flour, then gradually whisk in the cream. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking every minute until thickened.
2 Whisk in the wine, lemon juice and seasoning. Whisk the egg yolks in a bowl and whisk in a little of the hot sauce, then return egg mixture to sauce mixture and whisk thoroughly. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, whisking every 30 seconds until smooth.
3 Stir in crabmeat and check the seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until hot. Add the cheese and stir until melted. Serve at once with the toast.

Crab toasts for two: halve the quantities and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until cooked and thickened. When egg yolk is added, microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.

Slimmer's notes

Use half single cream and half milk instead of all cream for a less rich dish. This gives you only 455 Calories / 1910kJ per portion.

Snappy Tuna Macaroni

Speedy sausage rice

8¼ mins

Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of mushroom soup
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of celery soup
150-300ml / 5-10fl oz chicken stock
2 × 277g / 10oz cans ready-cooked 3-minute rice
10ml / 2tsp German mustard
450g / 1lb frankfurters, quartered

SERVES 5-6

1 Put butter in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted.
2 Stir in the soups, 150ml /5fl oz of the stock and the rice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice.
3 Stir in the mustard and frankfurters and a little extra stock if liked. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.

Right: *Quick Ham Medley*

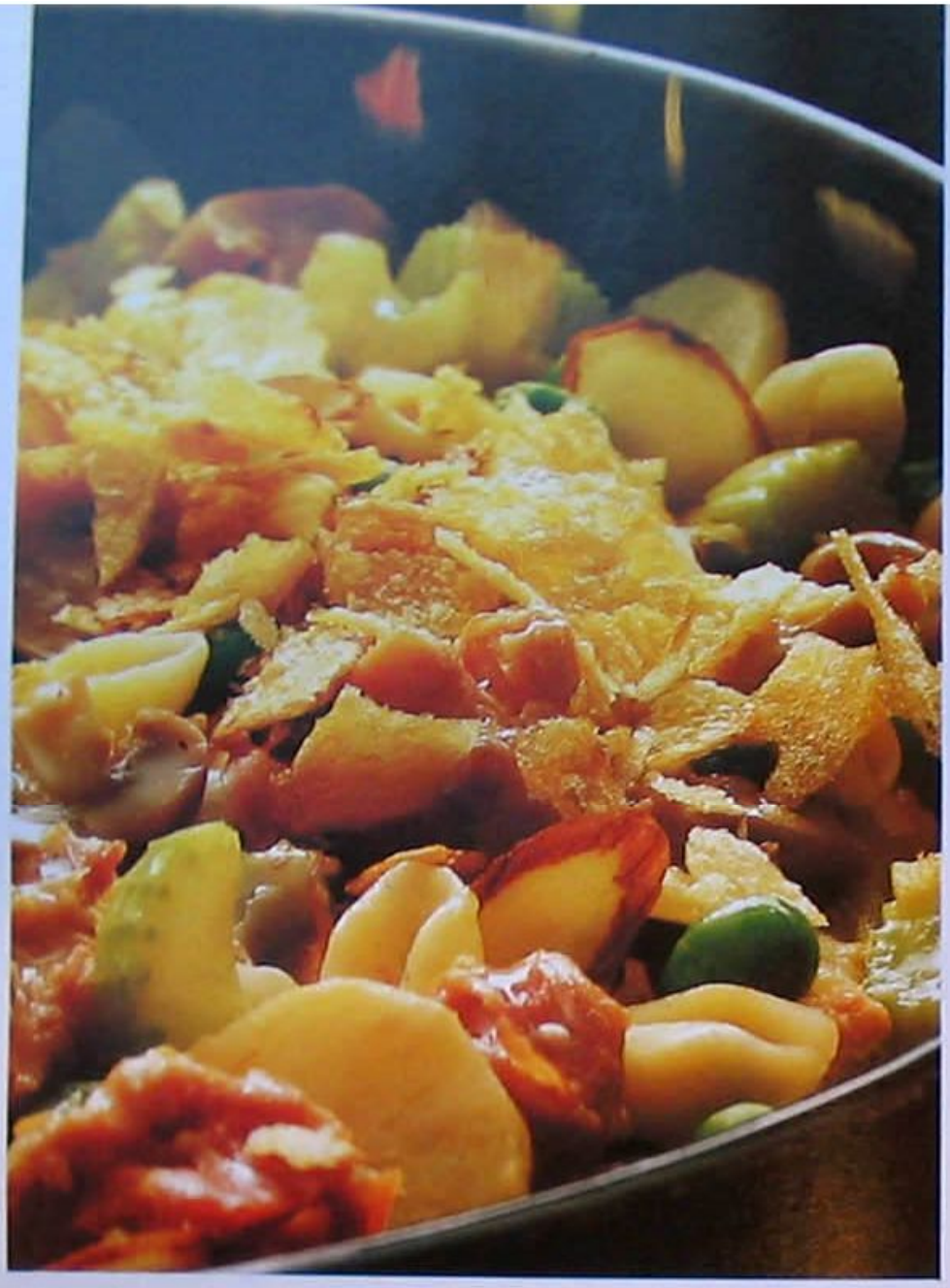
Quick ham medley

28 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz can ham, cut into small cubes
2 x 295g / 10.4oz cans of cream of chicken soup
228g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced (optional)
75g / 3oz small pasta shells
3 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz frozen peas
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
213g / 7½oz can mushrooms, drained and sliced
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
10ml / 2tsp chutney
150ml / ¼pt water
¼ chicken stock cube
15g / 3oz packet potato crisps, coarsely crushed

SERVES 4



How to microwave Quick ham medley

Place *the ham, soup, water chestnuts if using, pasta shells and celery in a large casserole. Add the onion, peas, almonds, mushrooms, parsley, chutney, water and crumbled stock cube. Mix all ingredients together lightly until thoroughly combined.*

Cover *dish very tightly with vented cling film and a lid to produce plenty of steam. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well, re-cover and cook at 70% (Medium-High) for 25-27 minutes, stirring several times until pasta is tender. Sprinkle with crisps.*

Beef joints

Keep a supply of well-chosen cuts of beef in your freezer and you will be ready for any number of unexpected guests. Thawing and cooking whole joints in the microwave is simple, speedy and a little bit special.

Raw beef freezes superbly and with the aid of the microwave, can make many a speedy and impressive meal. No longer do you have to wait 6-8 hours to thaw beef at room temperature, or even think 24 hours ahead to thaw it in the refrigerator. Unwrapped and placed in the microwave cooker, a frozen joint can be ready to serve in under 1½ hours.

When buying beef for the freezer, always choose the best available — freezing and microwave cooking cannot improve an inferior cut of meat.

Foreribs,* brisket, sirloin, topside, silverside, chuck steak and top rump are all suitable for freezing. Good quality meat freezes best as it remains tender after freezing. If freezer space is limited, choose boned and rolled joints as they take up less space. If the joint has not been boned and rolled, ask your butcher to saw off any protruding bones and trim fat. Defrosting time is included in the recipe time boxes. Standing after thawing is given separately.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: Use spare ribs.

Standing Rib Roast

Thawing and cooking

Thawing and cooking whole joints in the microwave is quick and efficient. It is generally advisable to thaw joints before cooking, but in some cases you can thaw and cook in one operation. However, never attempt to thaw and cook a stuffed piece of beef in one go. The inner surface of the beef will have been handled while stuffing the joint and a new filling introduced so thorough thawing and cooking is essential to destroy any bacteria present.

Standing times are very important and quite substantial for thawing and cooking meat. After thawing, the standing time allows the meat to thaw through to the centre, and after cooking in the microwave it allows the meat to complete cooking and rest before carving. This makes the meat easier to slice.

Cook's notes

Frozen raw beef may be thawed, then cooked and re-frozen perfectly safely, provided a little care is taken. Cool the cooked meat quickly in the refrigerator, re-package for the freezer immediately, then seal, label and freeze no longer than 3 months.

To keep meat moist after freezing and reheating, cover it in a tasty gravy or sauce. Try the Brown Sauce, page 615, making it up while the joint is standing.

Standing rib roast

40 mins

Standing time: 10-20 mins

Standing after thawing: 100 mins

If buying this cut from a butcher simply ask for a forerib. * To save time and effort, ask for the joint to be chined, leaving bone attached.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: Ask for bone-in rib roast.

1.8kg / 4lb frozen forerib * of beef, thawed (see steps and chart, opposite)

SERVES 8-10

1 Arrange the meat, fat side down, on the roasting rack and set in a baking dish to catch the juices. Calculate the total cooking time, (see chart, above right) and divide the time in half.

2 Microwave the roast at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for the remainder of the first half of calculated cooking time.

3 Turn the roast over, fat side up, and insert a microwave thermometer if using. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for the second half of cooking time, or until the preferred internal temperature is reached (see chart, above right).

4 Loosely cover with foil and leave to stand for 10-20 minutes before carving (see step, right) and serving.

Microwave times for Standing rib roast

	MINUTES PER 450g / 1lb	INTERNAL TEMPERATURE
Rare	7-12	50°C / 120°F
Medium	13-14	54°C / 135°F
Well done	14-15	64°C / 150°F

How to carve a rib roast

Lay the joint, rib-side down. Steady the meat with a two-pronged fork and use a sharpened carving knife to cut down along the backbone to remove the chine bone. Carve down across the grain of the meat towards the ribs. Then gently loosen the meat from the ribs with the knife to remove the slices. When nearly all the meat has been removed, lay the joint flat and carve the last slices horizontally.

How to freeze a beef joint

Choose *a heavy-duty freezer bag large enough to hold the joint. Alternatively, wrap tightly in freezer foil or cling film, leaving no part exposed.*

Place *joint in the bag and press out as much air as possible. This prevents frost forming inside the bag which spoils beef colour and flavour.*

Seal *with a plastic tie, string or rubber band. Label carefully, stating the cut, weight and date, and freeze the meat up to six months.*

How to thaw a beef joint

Unwrap *joint and lay on a roasting rack, placed in a dish to catch the juices. Thaw for one quarter of the time (see chart below).*

Shield *warm areas with smooth strips of foil. Turn over. Thaw for another quarter of time, until surface softens. Stand 10 minutes.*

Microwave *half remaining time. Turn meat over. Thaw for remaining time. Stand 20-30 minutes until a skewer can be inserted. Remove foil.*

Microwave times for thawing beef joints

CUT	TIME PER 450g / 1lb at 20-30% (DEFROST)	STANDING TIME	TIME PER 450g / 1lb at 50% (MEDIUM)	STANDING TIME
Boneless joints	10 mins	30-45 mins	6 mins	20-25 mins
Joints with bone	5-6 mins	30-45 mins	3-4 mins	25-30 mins

Rolled sirloin roast

72 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is such a good cut of beef that thawing and cooking can be done in one operation without toughening the meat.

2.3kg / 5lb piece frozen boned and rolled sirloin
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
225ml / 8fl oz water
25ml / 5tsp rich gravy granules
salt and pepper

SERVES 10-12

1 Place the unwrapped frozen meat on a roasting rack standing in a dish. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Turn the meat over, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 30 minutes. Turn the meat over and insert a microwave thermometer, if using. Cover again with the paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-50 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 52°C / 125°F. (The timing depends on the thickness of the meat and cooks the joint to medium-rare.)
4 Cover loosely with foil and leave to stand for 10 minutes.
5 Place 60ml / 4tbls meat juices from the dish in a bowl. Add the flour, water and gravy granules, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, stirring every minute until thickened. Season to taste. Carve the meat and serve with the gravy.

VARIATION
For a richer gravy, substitute 150ml / ¼pt red wine for half the water and add a bay leaf. Stir in 30ml / 2tbls single cream for the last minute.

Rolled Sirloin Roast

Traditional pot roast

71 mins

Standing time: 20-25 mins

Standing after thawing: 60 mins

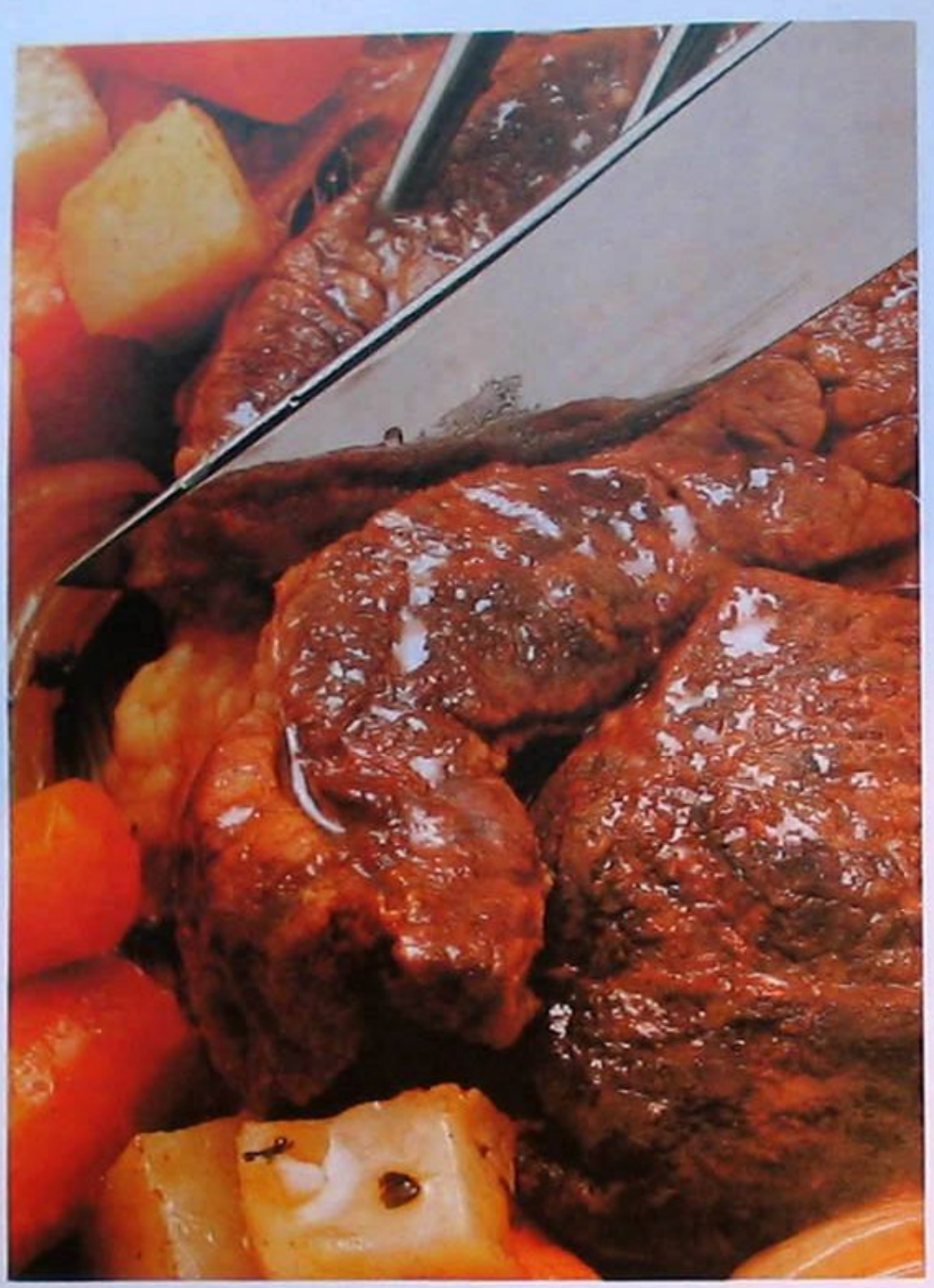
Pot-roasting beef with vegetables in a sauce is a traditional dish. It is perfectly suited to the microwave as there is no need for roast potatoes or Yorkshire pudding — everything is cooked in one bag.

1.4kg / 3lb frozen boneless topside, thawed (see steps and chart, page 667)
4 carrots, scraped and cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
1 onion, cut into eighths
1 large potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes

SAUCE
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée
125ml / 4fl oz water
15ml / 1tbls rich gravy granules
2.5ml / 1½ dried thyme
salt
1 bay leaf
SERVES 4-6

Cook's notes

Tougher and cheaper cuts such as silverside or brisket can be used, because pot-roasting is a slow, gentle way of cooking, so the meat tenderizes beautifully.



How to microwave Traditional pot roast

Place *the meat in a large roasting or boiling bag. Combine all the sauce ingredients and pour over the meat. Fasten bag with a plastic tie, string or rubber band. Place in a dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Turn the beef and reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes, rotating dish once. Turn the meat, and open the bag carefully.*

Add *the prepared vegetables, re-close bag and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25 minutes, rotating the dish twice. Leave to stand in the closed bag for 20-25 minutes before serving.*

Ice cream desserts

These stunning desserts provide the opportunity to use your microwave and freezer in partnership. Ice cream desserts are surprisingly easy to prepare, store well in the freezer and are impressive when served.

Frozen desserts and bombes are made by moulding ice cream in various ways. When cut or sliced for serving, they reveal a surprise centre or attractively striped layers. All the recipes here keep well in the freezer for one month, so they can all be made well in advance.

You can either make your own ice cream (see pages 361-365) or use commercial block ice cream — soft scoop melts too readily to be easy to mould. Use the microwave to soften the ice cream slightly so that it can be shaped, but take care not to melt it which will spoil the texture and affect the keeping qualities. For this reason, too, you will need to work quickly when adding flavourings and other ingredients.

Soufflé dishes, pudding basins and plastic microwave cookware are all suitable moulds to be used in the microwave at low power settings. For best results, always chill the mould before you start.

Iced Chestnut Gateau

the softened ice cream will stick to the sides more easily and smoothly. It will also freeze hard again more quickly. To ease unmoulding, line containers with greaseproof paper or cling film.

Thawing and serving

When serving time comes, use the microwave again to help unmould the frozen dessert. The dessert can go straight from the freezer into the microwave to thaw just enough to soften the outside so that the dessert will slip out of the container without spoiling its shape. Refreeze briefly to firm up before decorating, if needed, and soften for 20-30 minutes at room temperature to serve, if necessary. Alternatively, run a palette knife round the edge to loosen, turn out, decorate and serve.

If you are not serving the dessert immediately but want to store it for longer it is best to freeze it without decoration to avoid damage during storage.

* IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use ½ cup / 2pt basin.

Cook's notes

To turn out an ice cream dessert, place the serving plate over the dish and quickly invert both together; lift off the dish. It is best to use a well chilled serving plate.

Surprise coffee bombe

4 mins

Standing time: none

1L / 1¾pt block vanilla ice cream
1L / 1¾pt block coffee or chocolate ice cream
100g / 4oz chocolate vermicelli
50g / 2oz chopped toasted hazelnuts

DECORATION
275ml / ½pt double cream
10ml / 2tsp caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp instant coffee granules
10ml / 2tsp warm water

SERVES 6

How to microwave Surprise coffee bombe

Chill *a 1.1L / 2pt * pudding basin in the freezer for 1½ hours. Place the vanilla ice cream in a large bowl and microwave, uncovered, for 1½-2 minutes at 20-30% (Defrost) to soften.*

Spread *ice cream with a palette knife over the inside of the chilled basin in an even layer. Cover with greaseproof paper and return to freezer for 1 hour until firm.*

Soften *half coffee ice cream at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes. Stir in vermicelli. Spread coffee ice cream over vanilla layer in basin. Cover and freeze for 1 hour.*

Soften *remaining coffee ice cream at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes. Fold in hazelnuts. Spoon into centre of vanilla and coffee ice cream. Cover; freeze for 3-4 hours.*

To serve, *remove basin from freezer, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds to soften. Turn out on to a serving plate. Whip cream with sugar until it holds soft peaks. Reserve one quarter of the cream in a bowl.*

Dissolve *coffee granules in water and whisk into three quarters of the cream. Spread over bombe. Freeze for 10 minutes to firm. Decorate with remaining cream and whole toasted hazelnuts, if liked, and serve.*

PETER GRIFFIN

Orange * ice cream gateau

1 min

Standing time: none

575ml / 1pt block vanilla ice cream
finely grated zest of 1 orange
36 sponge fingers
2 small oranges, peeled and sliced

DECORATION
150ml / ¼pt double cream
30-45ml / 2-3tbls orange curd
sugared orange slices

SERVES 6

1 Prepare 10 × 20cm / 4 × 8in dish. Chill for 1-2 hours in the freezer. See Cook's notes.
2 Soften the ice cream, uncovered, in a large bowl in the microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes, stirring once or twice. Stir in the orange zest.
3 Line the sides of the prepared dish with sponge fingers. Spoon in a third of the ice cream and top with half the fresh orange slices. Repeat the layers, finishing with ice cream. Cover with the remaining sponge fingers cut to fit.
4 Press down gently with the palm of your hand so sponge fingers are level with the top of the dish. Cover with greaseproof paper; freeze for 3-4 hours until firm.
5 To serve, run a palette knife round the sides of the dish to loosen if necessary. Lift out gateau using paper strip. Peel off paper and place on a serving dish.
6 Whip the cream until thick then fold in the orange curd. Spread on top of the gateau and decorate with sugared orange slices and a crystallized violet.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use lemon cheese, juice and zest of small lemon instead.

Cook's notes

To make removal of this gateau easier, line the base of the loaf dish with a strip of greaseproof paper and let the ends stick up to make 'handles'.

PAUL WEBSTER

Orange Ice Cream Gateau

Iced chestnut gateau

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

This gateau makes a delicious dinner party dessert.

1L / 1¾pt block chocolate ice cream
2 egg whites
275ml / ½pt vanilla ice cream
250g / 8¾oz can sweetened chestnut purée

SERVES 6-8

1 Line the sides and base of a 18cm / 7in soufflé dish with greaseproof paper and chill for 1-2 hours in the freezer.
2 Microwave chocolate ice cream in a bowl, uncovered at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, until softened, stirring once or twice.
3 Line the base and sides of the prepared dish with the ice cream, pressing it in well with the back of a spoon. Cover with greaseproof paper and freeze until firm — about 1½ hours.
4 Whisk the egg whites until stiff when beaters are lifted. Microwave the vanilla ice cream in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-60 seconds. Beat the purée until soft, then gradually whisk into the ice cream. Fold in the egg whites.
5 Spoon the mixture into the centre of the frozen chocolate ice cream and level the top. Cover and freeze for 2 hours.
6 To serve, remove gateau from freezer and soften in the microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 20-30 seconds. Turn out gateau on to a serving dish and remove paper. Refreeze briefly to firm surface. Decorate and serve after 20-30 minutes at room temperature.

Strawberry frozen favourite

4½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

1L / 1¾pt block strawberry ice cream*
6 small meringues, broken up
Fresh strawberries to decorate

SAUCE
420g / 14.8oz can strawberries in syrup
a few drops lemon juice

SERVES 8

1 Line the base and sides of a 10 × 20cm / 4 × 8in dish with greaseproof paper and chill for 1-2 hours in the freezer.
2 Soften ice cream in bowl; microwave for 1½-2 minutes at 20-30% (Defrost), stirring three times.
3 Stir in the broken meringues, then spoon the ice cream into the chilled dish. Cover with greaseproof paper and freeze for 3-4 hours until firm.
4 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Place the strawberries in a bowl, reserving the syrup. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Stir; stand 3 minutes, then purée. Thin with 60ml / 4tbls of the reserved syrup and add the lemon juice. Chill 3-4 hours.
6 To serve, turn out; remove paper. Decorate with fresh strawberries, serve with sauce.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use boysenberry ice cream.

Cook's notes

For the strawberry frozen favourite, use conventionally made hard meringues; those made in the microwave are too soft.

Freezer notes

To store these desserts for longer, soften after 3-4 hours freezing as in recipes, remove dish, wrap cake and freeze.

Ice cream layer gateau

3½ mins

Standing time: none

1L / 1¾pt block ripple ice cream
1L / 1¾pt block hazelnut or chocolate ice cream

DECORATION
150ml / ¼pt double cream
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
50g / 2oz hazelnuts or toasted almonds (optional)
a few fresh blackberries or raspberries (optional)

SERVES 8

1 Line a 20cm / 8in soufflé dish with greaseproof paper. Chill in the freezer for 1-2 hours.
2 Soften the ripple ice cream in a bowl in the microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring two or three times.
3 Spoon the ripple ice cream into the chilled dish and level the top. Cover with greaseproof paper and freeze until firm — about 1 hour.
4 Soften the hazelnut ice cream in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring twice. Fill the dish with ice cream and level the top. Cover with greaseproof paper and freeze for 3-4 hours.
5 To serve, uncover the dish and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds. Turn out and peel off paper. Refreeze briefly to firm. Whip cream with the sugar and use to decorate gateau with nuts and berries.

Iced tutti frutti pudding

2 mins

Standing time: none

12 glacé cherries, chopped
15ml / 1tbls raisins, chopped
4 pieces ginger in syrup, drained or crystallized ginger chopped
15ml / 1tbls currants
30ml / 2tbls cherry brandy
1L / 1¾pt vanilla ice cream

DECORATION
150ml / ¼pt double cream
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
a few glacé cherries, quartered
angelica

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the cherries, raisins, ginger and currants in a bowl. Spoon over the cherry brandy and leave to soak for 2 hours. Meanwhile, chill an 850ml / 1½pt pudding basin in freezer 1-2 hours.
2 Place the ice cream in a bowl. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost), uncovered, for 1½-2 minutes, stirring two or three times.
3 Add the soaked fruits with their liquid to the ice cream and fold in. Turn into the chilled basin. Cover with greaseproof paper and freeze for 3-4 hours until firm.
4 To serve, uncover the basin and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds then turn out. Freeze again to firm. Whip cream with sugar to form soft peaks. Use to decorate with the cherries and angelica.

Junior fudge ripples

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

The chocolate coating and creamy nut filling of these ices make them especially popular with children. Make them in individual yoghurt pots or small cream cartons.

225g / 8oz chocolate, broken into small pieces
50g / 2oz vanilla fudge, or soft caramels
15ml / 1tbls double cream
575ml / 1pt vanilla ice cream

SERVES 6

1 Chill six individual yoghurt pots or cream cartons for 1 hour in the freezer.
2 Place the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until melted. Remove and beat chocolate until smooth.
3 Divide the melted chocolate between the chilled pots and spread over the insides with a knife or the back of a spoon to within about 12mm / ½in of the top. Place the pots back in the freezer for about 10 minutes to set the chocolate.
4 Break up the fudge and place in a small bowl with the cream. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 seconds or until the fudge has melted and set aside.
5 Microwave the ice cream in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes until softened, stirring once half way through. Remove the bowl from the cooker and stir the fudge mixture through the ice cream to give a ripple effect.
6 Divide the ice cream between the chocolate-lined pots, level tops with a knife and cover with greaseproof paper. Freeze for about 1 hour until firm.
7 To serve, uncover pots and snip rims of plastic cartons with scissors so they can be peeled off. For smaller servings, cut pots in half and peel off carton halves. Place ices on a serving plate.

Left: *Strawberry Frozen Favourite*
Right: *Iced Tutti Frutti Pudding*

Sweetcorn

Sweet and juicy corn on the cob can be cooked in the microwave in only a few minutes. It retains its fresh, appetizing appearance, maximum goodness and sweet flavour.

Fresh corn on the cob should be served on the day of purchase as it turns starchy if stored. Microwave corn either in the husk, which makes a natural covering to keep them succulent, or wrapped or covered in cling film, see steps, page 676. Remember to allow a standing time for corn cooked on the cob, since it will be very hot when first taken out of the microwave.

When choosing sweetcorn, look for cobs that are still in their green husks if possible as this is an indication of freshness. The grains should be plump and firm and of a uniform colour. Large or dark yellow kernels indicate age.

Frozen or canned corn kernels are easily available. Canned cream-style corn is ideal for soups or chowders, or buy kernels combined with chopped red peppers for variety. Frozen whole corn on the cob is available when fresh is not, as are bottled or canned baby corn cobs.

The kernels can be served simply as a vegetable accompaniment (they go particularly well with gammon or ham, bacon and chicken) or to add texture, flavour and colour to a variety of dishes such as Corn Chowder or Cheesy Corn Pot.

Succotash is a combination of corn kernels and broad beans

Succotash

20¼ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Broad beans provide a variation to kidney beans in this American dish. Tradition has it that sweetcorn and beans were grown together then cooked together by the Indians.

4 corn on the cob, 175-225g / 6-8oz each, husked
225g / 8oz frozen broad beans
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
150ml / ¼pt single cream (optional)
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

PETER REILLY

1 Microwave the corn on the cob as shown in the steps on page 676, following the times in the chart on page 677. When cool enough to handle, remove the kernels (see Cook's notes).
2 Microwave the broad beans and the water in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until tender, stirring once. Drain.
3 Melt the butter or margarine in a covered casserole at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the beans and corn kernels.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until hot, stirring once. Stir in the cream if using, and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds to heat through. Stir in the seasoning and stand for 2-3 minutes. Serve with garlic bread.

VARIATIONS

Use canned corn kernels and beans if wished. Drain and use as in step 3 above.

Add 2.5ml / ½tsp mixed dried herbs, then heat beans and corn.

Microtips

Broad beans need particular attention. Do not overcook the beans in the microwave or they will become hard as bullets.

Cook's notes

Remove kernels from corn on the cob to use as needed in recipes. Leave microwaved cobs until cool enough to handle, then, holding the cob securely, use a knife to scrape from the tip to the base of the cob to release the kernels.

Sweetcorn bake

14 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Serve this substantial bake with fresh green vegetables.

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
1 onion, finely chopped
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
425ml / ¾pt milk
150ml / ¼pt cider
2 x 340g / 12oz cans sweetcorn kernels, drained
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
175g / 6oz Cheddar cheese, grated
½ red pepper, seeded, cut into strips and blanched (see Microtips below)
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
90ml / 6tbls fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
25g / 1oz walnuts, chopped

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter or margarine and onion in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until the onion is tender. Stir in the flour.
2 Microwave the milk at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Whisk into the flour mixture.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until thick. Whisk several times. Whisk in the cider. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until bubbling.
4 Stir in the sweetcorn, 100g / 4oz cheese, blanched red pepper, parsley and seasoning. Turn into a 20 x 30cm / 8 x 12in dish. Sprinkle with the breadcrumbs, walnuts and remaining cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until hot. Stand for 3-5 minutes.

Microtips

To blanch the red pepper, place the strips in a container together with 30ml / 2tbls water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Drain well.

How to microwave unhusked corn on the cob

Arrange *the cobs on the cooker floor, evenly spaced. Microwave at 100% (High) as directed in the chart, page 677, rotating and rearranging once during cooking.*

Let stand *for 5 minutes, husking the corn after standing. To husk, hold the corn with absorbent paper, tip pointing down. Pull back the husk leaves — do this carefully to avoid the steam. Sharply pull away the silky tassels using the other hand. Pull the husk leaves back completely from the corn cob and cut off at the base.*

How to microwave husked corn on the cob

Wrap *individual cobs of fresh corn in separate pieces of cling film before placing in the cooker. Alternatively, use a dish (see step 2).*

Arrange *fresh husked corn in a rectangular baking dish, with equal space between them. Add 60ml/4tbls water and cover with vented cling film.*

Place *individually wrapped cobs or the dish of corn in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) as directed in the chart, right.*

Rearrange *two cobs halfway through cooking time. Turn them over so the tips are placed in a different part of the cooker or dish and rotate them.*

If cooking *three or more cobs, turn over and rearrange every 4 minutes, moving them to a different part of the cooker and rotating them.*

Leave *to stand for 3-5 minutes, still wrapped in cling film or tightly covered if in a dish. Unwrap with care to avoid the steam.*

Seasoned kernels

6¼ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve this dish as a vegetable accompaniment, or mix with low-fat soft cheese and use to fill rolls, or a cooked pastry case.

283g / 10oz packet frozen sweetcorn kernels
60ml / 4tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
10ml / 2tsp snipped chives
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4

1 Place the frozen sweetcorn and water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Drain and let stand for 2-3 minutes.
2 Put the butter or margarine in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted.
3 Stir in the corn, snipped chives, basil, sugar and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until heated through. Serve as a vegetable accompaniment or use for a sandwich filling.

Microwave times for fresh corn

TYPE OF CORN	QUANTITY	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Unhusked 175g-225g / 6-8oz each	1 2 3 4	3-5 mins 6-8 mins 8-10 mins 10-12 mins
Husked 175-225g / 6-8oz each	1 2 3 4	3-4 mins 5-6 mins 7-8 mins 9-10 mins

Microwave times for frozen and canned corn

TYPE OF CORN	QUANTITY	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Frozen corn Whole kernels	283g / 10oz 454g / 1lb	5-6 mins 7-8 mins
Canned corn Whole kernels and Cream-style	298g / 10½oz 340g / 12oz	2-3 mins 2-3 mins

How to microwave corn kernels

Place *canned, frozen or cream-style kernels in a dish. Drain off all but 30ml / 2tbls can juice. Add 60ml / 4tbls water to frozen corn.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) as directed in the chart, above, stirring once. Let frozen corn stand for 2-3 minutes; drain.*

Cheesy corn pot

10½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

2 x 238g / 10oz packets frozen sweetcorn kernels
60ml / 4tbls water
4 spring onions, chopped
50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
1 egg, lightly beaten
275ml / ½pt evaporated milk or single cream
150g / 5oz Gruyère cheese, grated
7.5ml / 1½tsp made English mustard, or to taste
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the corn, water and onions in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until the onion is tender and the corn hot.
2 Drain off the liquid from the vegetables. Stir the breadcrumbs, egg, milk or cream, 100g / 4oz cheese, the mustard and seasoning into the casserole.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then reduce to 70% (Medium-High) for 3-5 minutes until just firm around the edges and set in the centre.
4 Sprinkle over the remaining cheese. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 30-60 seconds to melt the cheese. Leave to stand for 3-5 minutes. Serve with crusty bread to make a substantial supper dish.

Creamy corn chowder

9½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

50g / 2oz lean bacon, finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
575ml / 1pt milk
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
298g / 10½oz can cream-style corn
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1 small egg, beaten
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika (optional)
30-45ml / 2-3tbls soured cream to serve

SERVES 6

1 Place the bacon and onion in a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the bacon is coloured and onion tender, stirring once.
2 Gradually blend 275ml / ½pt milk with the flour. Stir into the onion mixture and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until thick and bubbling, stirring once.
3 Whisk in the remaining milk, then stir in the sweetcorn, parsley, egg and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until smooth and hot, stirring several times. Let stand for 2-3 minutes.
4 Serve hot or chilled. Sprinkle with paprika, if liked. For a sharper flavour, swirl the soured cream into the chowder to serve.

Corn and tomato casserole

11 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve as a snack with toast or French bread, or as a vegetable accompaniment to egg and cheese dishes or sausages.

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 onion, chopped
450g / 1lb sweetcorn kernels, frozen or canned and drained
450g / 1lb tomatoes, skinned and sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme

Creamy Corn Chowder

2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
5ml / 1tsp sugar
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the butter or margarine and onion into a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until the onion is tender, stirring once.
2 Stir in the sweetcorn, tomatoes, herbs and sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring once, until the tomato is beginning to soften.
3 Gradually blend the chicken stock into the flour until smooth, then stir into the casserole. Season. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the mixture thickens. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

VARIATION
For a creamy dish, use a 150ml / 5fl oz canned condensed cream soup or 60ml / 4tbls soured cream instead of the stock and flour.

Pork tenderloin

This lean and — as it's name implies — very tender cut is tailor-made for microwaving. It is especially good accompanied by quickly prepared fruity sauces and stuffings.

Tenderloin or fillet is one of the leanest pork cuts. The meat itself requires minimal preparation, so you can concentrate on accompaniments that keep the pork moist and complement its flavour.

A pocket cut in the tenderloin holds herbs and other seasonings — or a more substantial stuffing of vegetable strips or fruit quickly softened in the microwave. Apples, apricots and gooseberries, with their refreshing tartness, are good choices to offset the pork. Orange or lemon juice, or wine adds piquancy to simple sauces and gravies that cook with the meat.

Use a microwave browning dish to give an appetizing finish to the meat or glaze the tenderloin with honey. The chart on page 680 gives timings for microwaving tenderloin. If you do not have a temperature probe, test after standing time with a skewer; the juices should run clear.

Gooseberry Tenderloin

DAVE KING

Normandy pork

31 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

2 x 350g / 12oz pork tenderloins
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried sage
2.5ml / ½tsp crumbled dried bay leaf
75ml / 3fl oz dry cider or calvados
3 garlic cloves, each cut into 10 slivers
30 tiny sprigs fresh rosemary or 30 dried leaves
15g / ½oz butter
75ml / 3fl oz chicken stock
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley
15-30ml / 1-2tbls lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Slice horizontally three-quarters of the way through each tenderloin to make a pocket.
2 Season the inside of each pocket with salt, pepper and a sprinkling of dried herbs. Sprinkle about 30ml / 2tbls of the cider or calvados over each tenderloin and secure with wooden cocktail sticks to make a neat roll.
3 With a small sharp knife, make 15 small incisions in each joint. Push a sliver of garlic and rosemary into each one.
4 Heat a large browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the butter and press the pork firmly on to the surface. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes.
5 Turn the joints over and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1½ minutes. Cover the dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes or until the meat is tender. Remove the pork from the browning dish, discard the cocktail sticks. Stand, covered for about 8 minutes.
6 Add the stock to the juices in the browning dish and microwave for 3 minutes at 100% (High). Correct the seasoning and add the parsley and lemon juice to taste. Pour into a heated sauce boat.
7 In a large ladle, gently heat the remaining cider or calvados over a very low flame. Ignite and pour over the pork, standing well back. Allow the flames to die down: serve with the sauce.

Microtips

When using a browning dish, never pre-heat the dish longer than the recommended time as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on an upturned heatproof glass plate or special microwave trivet.

Cook's notes

Calvados is a fiery, apple-flavoured brandy distilled in Normandy from the local cider. It is drunk after meals and used in cooking. Dry cider is a good substitute. Or use apple juice and do not flambé.

For a very simple pork and apple dish, microwave plain pork tenderloin as in the steps below but spread softened apple chunks over the pork for the last 6-9 minutes of cooking.

Microwave times for tenderloin

WEIGHT	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)
For average 350g / 12oz tenderloin	3 mins	10-15 mins
Per 450g / 1lb	3 mins	14-18 mins

How to microwave pork tenderloin

Shield *ends with well secured foil. Insert the temperature probe into the centre of the thickest part. Estimate the cooking time (see chart).*

Place *the meat on a roasting rack in a dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for half the time.*

Remove *foil, turn meat and cook until temperature reaches 74°C / 165°F. Stand, covered, for about 8 minutes until it reaches 78°C /170°F.*

Vegetable-stuffed pork

18 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

275ml / ½pt dry white wine
45ml / 3tbls apple sauce
1 small onion, chopped
2 lemon slices
3 whole cloves
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
large pinch of dried tarragon
350g / 12oz pork tenderloin
3 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1 carrot, cut into long thin strips
2 spring onions, each quartered lengthways

SERVES 2

1 In a large shallow dish, mix the wine, apple sauce, onion, lemon slices, cloves, garlic and tarragon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated.

2 Cut the tenderloin in half horizontally, without cutting through the opposite long side. Open out and place in the dish with the wine marinade. Cover and leave to marinate in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

3 Place the bacon on absorbent paper and cover with another sheet. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes or until lightly brown but not crisp.

4 Place the butter, carrot strips and onion in a shallow casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes until tender. Stir half way through cooking.

5 Remove the meat from the marinade, place the vegetables in the centre of the tenderloin, close up and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Wrap bacon rashers round the pork and secure with more cocktail sticks.

6 Place the joint on a roasting rack. Insert a thermometer at an angle into the meat; not touching the stuffing. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 10-15 minutes or until temperature reaches 74°C / 165°F, turning dish two or three times. Stand, covered, for 8 minutes before carving.

Vegetable-Stuffed Pork

Gooseberry tenderloin

30 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

2 x 350g / 12oz pork tenderloins
100g / 4oz cooking gooseberries *
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1 onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
10ml / 2tsp chopped marjoram or 5ml / 1tsp dried
pinch of ground cloves
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
150ml / ¼pt ham or chicken stock
30ml / 2tbls honey

SERVES 4

1 Slit through each tenderloin horizontally, leaving it uncut along one long side. Open each tenderloin out flat like a book. Beat with a meat bat or rolling pin until the meat has approximately doubled and is about 6mm / ¼in thick.

2 Top and tail the gooseberries and finely chop half of them. Cut remainder in half and reserve.

3 Put the butter and onion in a small dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in the finely chopped gooseberries and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for a further 5 minutes. Stir in the breadcrumbs, herbs and cloves and 15ml / 1tbls wine or stock.

4 Spread the mixture on the open pork tenderloins, then roll up from a long edge, tie at intervals with strong thread or string.

5 Place in a shallow casserole dish and spoon the honey on top. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power and microwave for 10 minutes at 50% (Medium).

6 Add the reserved gooseberries, and the remaining wine and stock. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for a further 10-15 minutes or until tender, turning the joints over several times during cooking.

7 Let stand for 8 minutes. Remove string, top the pork with the gooseberries and serve with the sauce from the dish.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use cooking apples.

STAR RECIPE

Paella

This delicious mixture of rice, seafood and chicken — a speciality of southern Spain — cooks gently in the microwave to give perfect results that look and taste superb.

Paella gets its unique flavouring and rich yellow colouring from the saffron strands used. This spice is available from most health food shops, chemists and delicatessens. However, because the strands are rather expensive to buy, you can replace them with the less pricey, powdered type, if preferred: use 2.5ml / ½tsp to the quantity of rice given in the recipe.

If you are unable to obtain either the strand or powdered saffron, use 2.5ml / ½tsp ground turmeric instead. This spice will certainly give the Paella the attractive yellow colouring required, however, the flavour — although still good — will not be authentic.

Paella makes a delicious dish that is quite substantial enough on its own, but for special occasions it is extra good served with warm crusty bread, a crisp green salad and a carafe of red wine. Finish with Crème Caramel and fruit.

Paella

35 mins

Standing time: none

Remember to put a plate or bowl on the table for the chicken bones, prawn and mussel shells, and also provide plenty of napkins for sticky fingers.

30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
350g / 12oz long-grain rice
700ml / 1¼pt boiling chicken stock
4 good pinches of saffron strands
salt
100g / 4oz frozen peas
275ml / ½pt mussels (in shells)
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
16 whole prawns
15g / ½oz butter, melted
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
4 chicken thigh joints
450g / 1lb Chorizo sausages, sliced
2 tomatoes, skinned and seeded

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

Fresh mussels should be cooked and eaten on the day of purchase. Check for dead mussels by tapping any open shells and discarding any which do not close immediately: this is most important.

The fish and meat content for Paella may be changed according to personal preference and could include cubes of ham instead of Chorizo sausage and squid, or clams in place of the mussels.

How to microwave Paella

Place *the oil, chopped onion and crushed garlic in a large bowl or casserole. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir in the rice, boiling stock and saffron strands. Lightly season with salt and mix well.*

Re-cover *the bowl with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and continue cooking for a further 10-12 minutes, until the water is absorbed, stirring twice during the cooking time.*

Stir *the frozen peas into the rice mixture, then cover and keep on one side while preparing the mussels. Thoroughly wash and scrub the mussels and remove the beards. Discard any cracked mussels or any which do not close when tapped.*

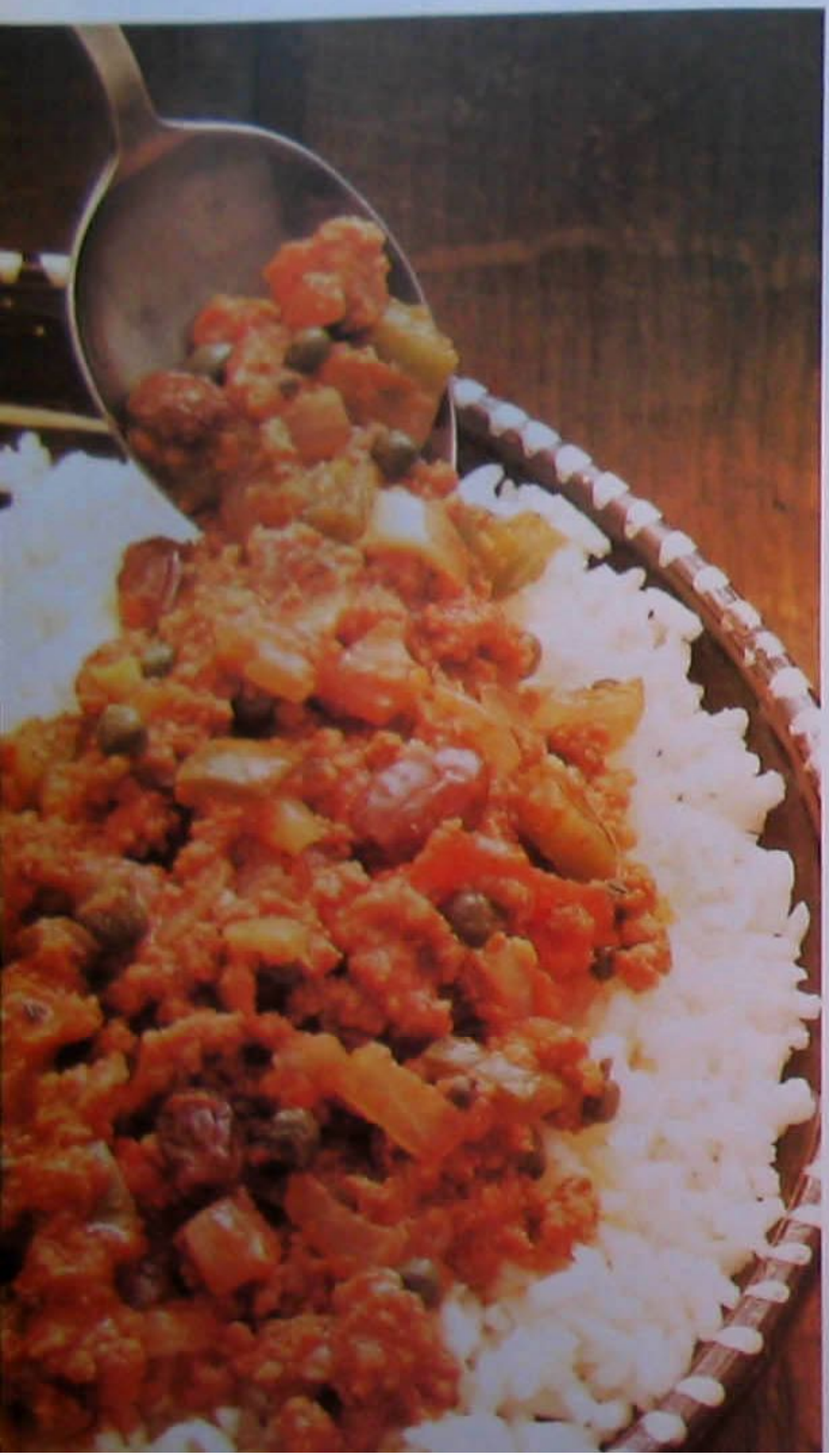
Place *the cleaned mussels in a medium bowl and add the dry white wine. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes or until the mussels have opened. Discard any mussels which remain closed.*

Drain *the mussels and add to the rice mixture with the prawns. Mix the melted butter with paprika and brush over the chicken thighs. Microwave on a roasting rack at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes, rearranging the chicken once during the cooking time.*

Add *the sliced chorizo sausage to the rice mixture and stir in the chicken and skinned and seeded tomatoes, quartered. Mix all the ingredients lightly together. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Serve with crusty bread and a green salad.*

Canny mince

Combine the speed and efficiency of a microwave cooker with a can of minced beef and onions from the store-cupboard and you will never be short of a satisfying main course to make at short notice.



Keep a few cans of minced beef and onions * in store and you will have an excellent base for many quick and tasty dishes. Combined with some favourite flavourings and interesting ingredients, you will find the range of ideas wide enough to please everyone — from a lunch-time snack of Hot Dog Specials (ready in just three minutes!), to a delicious supper party dish like the layered Mexican Pie.

Curried beef hash

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
15ml / 1tbls mild curry powder
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 bay leaf
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions*
227g / 8oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
30-45ml / 2-3tbls sultanas
5-10ml / 1-2tsp capers

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, green pepper, curry powder, oil, garlic and bay leaf in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.

2 Stir in the flour, canned beef, chopped tomatoes, sultanas and capers. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until piping hot, stirring halfway through. Remove the bay leaf.

3 Serve with boiled rice, sliced bananas and mango chutney.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Steak and onions or savoury mince

Curried Beef Hash

VARIATION
To give a subtle flavour, stir in 15ml / 1tbls chunky orange marmalade at step 2.

Curried beef hash for two: reduce curry powder to 7.5ml / ½tbls and use half a can of minced beef and onions (refrigerate or freeze the remainder); the other ingredients remain the same. Microwave mixture for 2-3 minutes at step 2.

Freezer notes

Any leftover green pepper can be diced and frozen in a polythene bag for up to 3 months, ready to use as a quick flavouring for scrambled eggs, soups, stews and casseroles.

Short-time moussaka

13¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

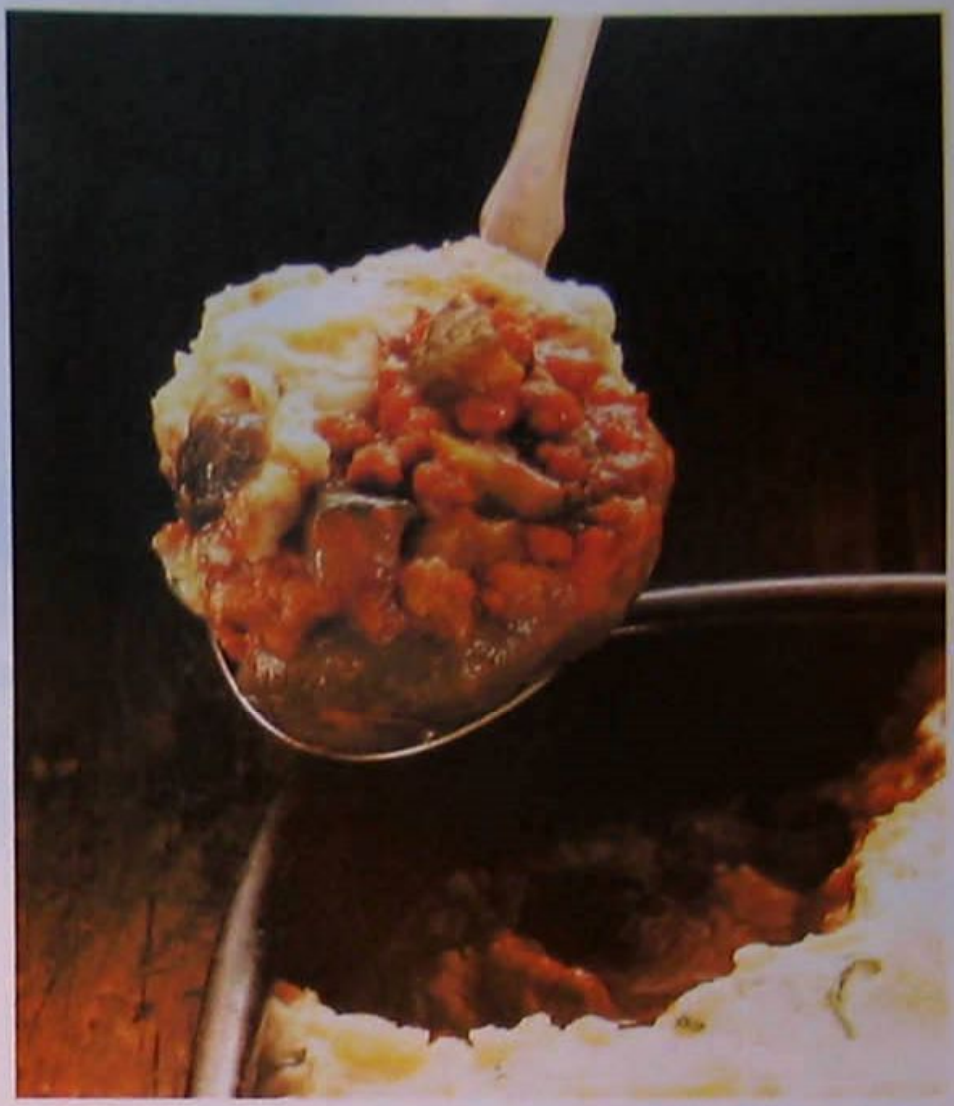
This dish provides a complete meal in itself. It can easily stretch to two extra portions if you serve it with warmed pitta bread and a large tossed green salad.

1 aubergine, ends trimmed, cut into 6mm / ¼in thick slices
salt for sprinkling
1 small onion, chopped
225g / 8oz courgettes, diced
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp mixed dried herbs
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
pepper

SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1 small egg, beaten
100g / 4oz cottage cheese

SERVES 4

1 Layer the slices of aubergine in a colander with a sprinkling of salt between each layer. Leave to drain for 10 minutes.
2 Meanwhile, combine the onion and courgette in a bowl with the oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until softened, stirring halfway through cooking. Mix in the minced beef, tomato purée, garlic, mixed herbs, flour and pepper to taste.
3 Thoroughly rinse the aubergine slices in cold water, then drain and place in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until tender, rearranging the slices after 2 minutes. Keep on one side, covered, while preparing the sauce.
4 Put butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds or until melted. Stir in the cornflour, then smoothly blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until thickened and smooth, stirring briskly after 1 minute. Stir in the grated cheese and parsley.
5 Beat the egg with the cottage cheese and stir into the sauce.
6 Layer the aubergine slices and mince mixture in a shallow 1.5L / 2½pt baking dish, then coat the surface with the sauce. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until topping is almost set, rotating dish twice during cooking. Let stand for 5 minutes.



Short-time Moussaka

Slimmer's notes

The calorie content of this recipe can be easily reduced to 345 Cal / 1450 kJ per portion, by using low-fat Cheddar cheese and skimmed milk. It is delicious served with a watercress and onion and celery salad, tossed in lemon juice or a tomato and herb salad if liked.

Mexican pie

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This spicy dish is delicious served with a shredded lettuce, tomato, avocado and red kidney bean salad.

½ green or red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
1.5-2.5ml / ¼-½tsp chilli powder
45ml / 3tbls finely chopped stoned olives

TOPPING
1 large egg, beaten
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
salt and pepper
4 tortillas
40g / 1½oz corn chips, or 1 small packet plain salted crisps, coarsely crushed
50g / 2oz Edam cheese, grated

SERVES 4-6

Microtips

This dish is microwaved at 50% (Medium) at step 4 to ensure the layers cook through gently without overcooking the topping.

Cook's notes

Tortillas are Mexican corn pancakes. These are available from delicatessens in 310g / 10.9oz cans, each containing 16-18 tortillas. Once the can is opened the remaining pancakes can be wrapped tightly in a polythene bag and stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, or frozen for up to 3 months. Alternatively, use bought or homemade pancakes or crêpes, if preferred (see page 464, for instructions on making crêpes).

How to microwave Mexican pie

Put *the chopped pepper, onion and oil in a casserole; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in the beef, cornflour, oregano, purée, chilli and olives. Re-cover and microwave for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.*

Lightly *whisk together the beaten egg, soured cream and seasoning in a bowl until thoroughly combined. Arrange 2 of the tortillas, slightly overlapping, in a shallow 1.1L / 2pt rectangular baking dish.*

Spread *half the chilli beef mixture evenly over the tortillas. Cover with half the soured cream and egg topping mixture. Repeat the layers in this way, using the remaining tortillas, chilli beef and soured cream topping mixture.*

Scatter *over the crushed corn chips, or crisps, then sprinkle with grated cheese. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, rotating dish every 3 minutes, until cream mixture sets. Let stand for 5 minutes.*

Hungarian-style stew

12 mins

Standing time: none

1 large potato, peeled and diced
30ml / 2tbls water
425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions
10ml / 2tsp paprika
1 garlic clove, crushed
2-3 canned red pimientos, cut into thin strips
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar

DUMPLINGS
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
50g / 2oz shredded suet or cooking margarine
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds
60-75ml / 4-5tbls water

TO SERVE
2 pickled sweet and sour cucumbers, chopped
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Put the diced potato in a bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Add the minced beef, paprika, garlic, pimientos and brown sugar. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
3 Sift flour into a bowl and mix in the suet, salt and caraway seeds. Add sufficient water to bind ingredients together to form a soft dough. Form into eight dumplings and arrange on top of mixture.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until the dumplings are well risen and cooked through. Serve at once with the chopped sweet and sour cucumbers and the yoghurt handed separately, to spoon over each portion.

Slimmer's notes

Omit the dumplings: stir in the chopped cucumbers and yoghurt at the end of stage 2. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute. Served this way it will be only 215Cal / 905kJ per portion.

Hot dog specials

3 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
½ x 425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup
2.5-5ml / ½-1tsp Worcestershire sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
4 frankfurters
4 hot dog rolls

SERVES 4

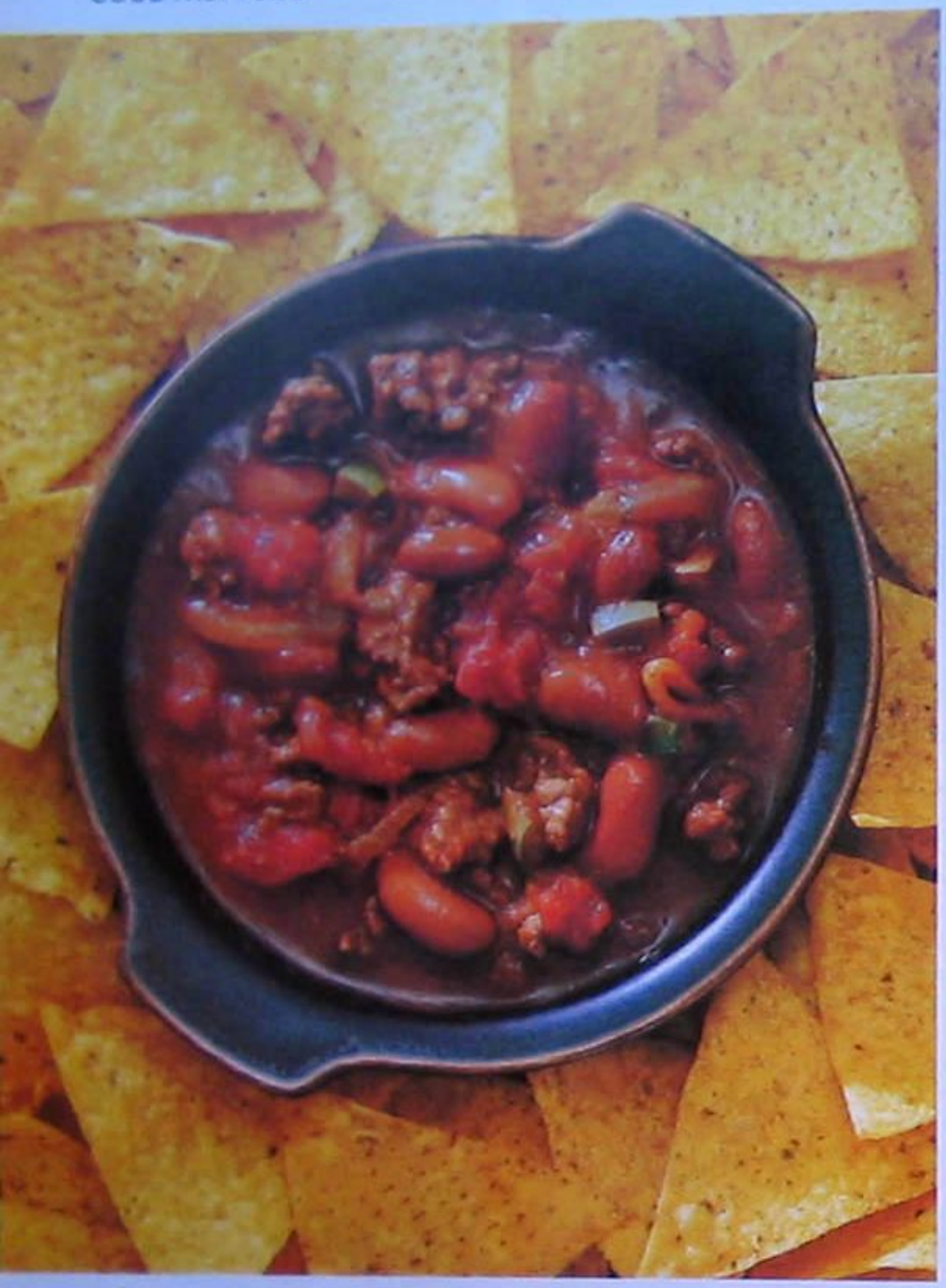
1 Combine the onion, minced beef, tomato ketchup, Worcestershire sauce and mustard powder in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the onion is softened and the meat mixture is hot. Leave on one side, covered, while preparing the frankfurters and rolls.
2 Prick the frankfurters and wrap them all in a cling film parcel. Prick the cling film parcel and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds until heated through.
3 Place the hot dog rolls on 2 sheets of absorbent paper in the cooker and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until hot.
4 Split the rolls lengthways and fill each one with a hot frankfurter and a coating of the spicy beef sauce. Serve with a 'finger' salad of celery and carrot sticks and apple wedges.

Hot dog specials for two: halve the quantities given and microwave the minced beef mixture for 1-2 minutes. Microwave two cling-filmed frankfurters for only 25 seconds and 2 rolls for 15 seconds.

Hog Dog Specials

Cook's notes

Turn the leftover canned minced beef and onions into a plastic container, cover tightly and either store in the refrigerator for up to 2 days or freeze for up to 2 months. Use as required.



Speedy chilli con carne

6½ mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, chopped
½ green or red pepper, seeded and chopped
3 fresh green chillies, seeded and finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
227g / 8oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
227g / 8oz can red kidney beans, drained
15-30ml / 1-2tbls tomato chutney or tomato relish
425g / 15oz can minced beef and onions
2.5/5ml / ½-1tsp chilli powder
1 garlic clove, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano, or dried mixed herbs

SERVES 4

Speedy chilli con carne for two: make up the recipe as directed, but omit the canned tomatoes and instead use 2 skinned and chopped fresh tomatoes. Use only half the can of minced beef and onions and 1.5-2.5ml / ¼-½tsp chilli powder to taste. Microwave the mixture at 100% (High) for 3 minutes at step 2.

How to microwave Speedy chilli con carne

Combine *the onion, green or red pepper, chillies and oil in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until softened. Stir in the tomatoes, beans, chutney, minced beef, chilli powder, garlic and oregano.*

Re-cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until the mixture is piping hot. Serve the Speedy Chilli con Carne with corn chips, freshly boiled rice, or pasta if preferred, accompanied with a crisp green salad.*

Cook's notes

For special occasions, top each serving of Speedy Chilli con Carne with a spoonful of soured cream, sprinkled with snipped chives and diced red pepper. Use tomato purée instead of tomato chutney, or relish, if preferred.

Microwaving with autosensor

Using a microwave with an autosensor takes the guesswork out of cooking. Simply select the setting you require, press start and the cooker will switch off automatically when the food is cooked.

The autosensor feature takes the ease of microwave cooking one step further. No power level or time setting is necessary: the autosensor microwave can cook a whole range of foods for you — automatically.

How it works

Food cooked by a microwave with an autosensor is always covered completely, either with cling film or a fitted lid. While the food is cooking there is a gradual build-up of steam. The steam eventually escapes in a burst: either through the cling film (which becomes permeable at about 100°C and allows the steam to pass through)

Use the autosensor to cook fish to perfection — automatically

DEMONSTRATED

or from around the edges of the lidded container. This puff of steam is crucial for the autosensor to produce accurate cooking results. The cooker door should not be opened during the cooking cycle or it will alter this gradual build-up of steam pressure.

The microwave cookers featuring an autosensor, monitor this burst of steam in one of two ways. Either by a temperature sensor or 'thermistor' which detects a sudden increase in temperature inside the cooker once the steam escapes. Or, by a humidity sensor fitted in the cooker to detect the initial burst of steam. In both cases, in the more basic models this will signal the end of the cooking cycle. Sophisticated models, whether fitted with a temperature or humidity sensor have a two-stage cycle. These machines have been pre-programmed to calculate the cooking time once the sensor has detected the initial burst of steam. The cooker does this by memorising the time taken for the sensor to detect the steam after the first cooking stage. The remaining cooking time — or second cooking stage — is then automatically calculated, based on a pre-programmed formula and on the length of the first cooking stage. Some models display and count-down the remaining cooking time. The cooker door may be opened during the second stage.

The range of settings offered by manufacturers on their machines gives various degrees of flexibility in autosensor cooking. A new advance is to provide added settings which enable you to shorten or lengthen the second stage timing to produce foods cooked exactly to your own taste.

Foods to cook on autosensor

The choice of foods you can cook on autosensor will depend on the number of settings on the cooker. The basic models with two settings — High and Low — are designed for cooking small quantities of fresh food such as fish, poultry pieces, lamb or pork chops, beefburgers, vegetables (both fresh and frozen) and fruit. These cookers cannot cope with more than 350g / 12oz of food at one time. Therefore, whole poultry, roasts, casseroles and cakes should be cooked using the conventional microwave methods.

More sophisticated models have a wide range of autosensor settings which enable you to cook whole chickens, roasts, pot-roasts and large casseroles. Also fresh or

Do

- Cover all food tightly with cling film or a lid. Large dishes may require two overlapping pieces of cling film.
- Let food stand as with conventional microwave cooking.
- Loosen cling film as the recipe states for the standing time only. This will prevent a vacuum forming and mis-shaping the food.
- Ensure that the interior of the cooker is dry to help produce accurate cooking results.
- Make sure there is enough room for the food to cook without touching the cling film, so that it is not pierced during cooking.

Don't

- Open the oven door during the full cooking cycle on basic models, or during the initial cycle on more sophisticated models: this will cause inaccurate results.
- Be put off when you see the cling film ballooning up. It will not burst as it becomes permeable around 212°F / 100°C.
- Use roasting or freezing bags as they will melt or burst.
- Preheat or use a browning dish as the heat it generates gives inaccurate results.
- Stand over food when removed from the cooker; the build up of steam could cause burns.

How to cook food on autosensor

Food *must be covered tightly with cling film or a fitted lid to produce a build-up of steam.*

Sophisticated models *have a two-stage cycle. Food may be removed to turn or stir during the second stage.*

Uncover *food cooked on autosensor carefully to avoid the steam. Roll cling film back from the furthest edge.*

frozen fish or vegetables, jacket potatoes, beef and chicken portions, pork and lamb dishes, quick meat sauces, stews and soft fruits. Provided you choose food or dishes which have a programmed cycle on your autosensor you do not have to use the manufacturer's booklet. The cooker will calculate the cooking time for you, using information about the type and quantity of food. For example, stuffed fish, chops in a sauce, casseroles or meat sauces will all cook successfully on the autosensor setting. On the basic autosensor models some recipes may require more than one cycle.

Cookware for the autosensor

Choose cookware for use with the autosensor bearing in mind that food must be securely sealed in the container. Cling film can be used with most containers but will not adhere tightly enough to plastic containers or glass cookware that has decorative coatings on the outside. Only use these containers if they come with fitted lids.

Do not use roasting or freezing bags because, unlike cling film, they do not become permeable at high temperatures and so with the build-up of steam and temperature they will melt or burst. Browning dishes cannot be used either (even as a casserole dish) as the heating element will give an inaccurate reading.

Remember you are still cooking by microwave, so the rule about not using metal still applies. Check manufacturer's instructions for recommended cookware for individual models.

Using the autosensor for reheating

Food can be reheated by selecting High or Low on the basic models, or the reheating setting on more sophisticated cookers. Exactly the same principle on the release of steam is in operation. This means food can easily be prepared and cooked in advance. Plated meals, canned foods, such as soups and vegetables, or whole casseroles or portions of food can all be reheated successfully. Some models recommend reheating pastry products, rice, pasta and beverages on the autosensor.

Autosensor and thawing

The autosensor cannot be used for thawing alone. However, some cookers include programmes for cooking certain foods from frozen, such as beef, lamb, pork, chicken, fish and vegetables. Defrost-cook settings are a complete cycle which should not be interrupted until the cooker switches off automatically once the food is cooked. For all other programmes, the food should be room temperature.

For thawing foods only, some microwave cookers are now featuring an automatic thawing programme or a defrost indicator. These work separately from the autosensor and will calculate the timing needed to defrost food when given information about the type and weight of food.

Vegetables are ideal for cooking with autosensor. Garnish to serve.

Sponge puddings

Sponge puddings are one of the microwave's great success stories: speed and ease of cooking combined with super-light results make these warming traditional puddings even more tempting.

Upside-down puddings, fruity sponges or packet mix dishes — all make the very best use of speedy microwave energy to produce light, moist sponges. Fruit combinations are ideal for adding flavour and texture and an upside-down topping is the answer to the drawback of mixtures which do not brown during cooking.

Microwaved sponge puddings have a very moist, springy texture and are noticeably more spongy than conventionally-cooked ones. (Leftovers dry out more quickly than conventionally-baked or steamed sponge puddings, too, although they can be refreshed once).

The puddings here are made using one of two basic methods — creaming and 'all-in-one'. Creaming is the traditional way and microwaving can speed up the process

Orange and Ginger Pudding

by softening the butter. Adding the eggs and flour after creaming is sometimes thought to give a lighter texture but the all-in-one method, using baking powder for extra lightness, is just as successful — and is certainly faster.

Almost any shape dish can be used for microwaved sponge puddings, from rectangular loaf dishes to conventional pudding basins. If using a boilable non-stick pudding basin, there is no need to grease the sides. Greasing would be necessary, however, if you want to improve the appearance of a plain sponge by a coating of crumbs on the sides of the bowl.

There are other ways in which the colour of sponge puddings can be made more attractive — adding chocolate, spices, fruit or a colourful topping will help, as will a few drops of yellow food colouring in a plain recipe.

While most sponges are a one hundred per cent success, it is worth noting that puddings with a layer of syrup or honey in the base are not recommended for microwave cooking: microwave energy is attracted to fats and sugars and their high sugar content will make the puddings more liable to burn. Similarly, energy concentrated at the bottom of the basin might make it crack or burn if it is not heatproof.

As a rule, to prevent overcooking of fruits, microwave fresh fruit puddings at a low power. While most plain puddings cook well at 100% power, those with a high proportion of fat and sugar are better cooked at medium power.

Traditional sponge pudding

9 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

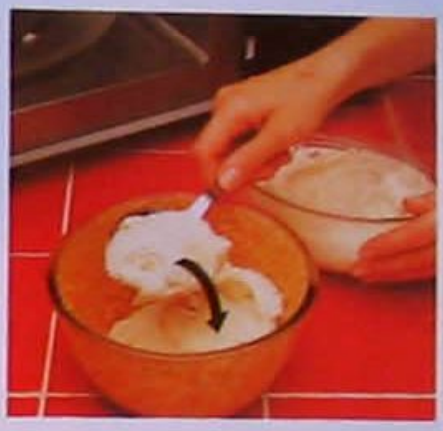
1-2 digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
175g / 6oz butter
175g / 6oz caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
few drops of vanilla flavouring
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
60ml / 4tbls milk

SERVES 6

How to microwave Traditional sponge pudding

Lightly *grease the base and sides of a 1.1L / 2pt pudding basin and coat the sides evenly with biscuit crumbs. If necessary, soften the butter by microwave (see Microtips below).*

Cream *the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat eggs with vanilla flavouring then gradually beat into the creamed mixture. Sift and fold in flour. Stir in the milk.*



Spoon *the mixture into the prepared dish and spread evenly. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 9 minutes, turning the dish every 2-3 minutes for even cooking.*

Test *pudding is cooked by inserting a cocktail stick; it should come out clean when pushed into centre. Remove from the cooker using oven gloves. Stand for 2 minutes, then turn out.*

Cook's notes

The flavour of the basic sponge pudding can be altered by the addition of any of the following: grated zest of an orange or a lemon, 2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger, 15ml / 1tbls ground almonds with a few drops of almond flavouring, 2.5ml / ½tsp ground cardamom, or 50g / 2oz finely chopped hazelnuts or walnuts.

An assortment of dessert sauces can be used to add the finishing touch to a plain pudding — see recipes from page 257, Part 10, or try the fruit sauce as given in Microtips, right.

Microtips

To soften butter, microwave 175g / 6oz at 30% (Low) for 15 seconds.

The steps above show how to microwave a traditional sponge pudding in a basin. To make a loaf-shaped pudding (as illustrated on page 695), use a 900g / 2lb loaf dish and follow the same timings as for the basic recipe. Serve with blackcurrant sauce made with a 385g / 13½oz can blackcurrant pie filling and the grated zest and juice of an orange. Microwave the pie filling with the orange juice and zest at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice.

Eve's pudding

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

350g / 12oz cooking apples
grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
45ml / 3tbls sugar
1 packet lemon sponge pudding mix
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Peel the apples and cut into thick slices. Lightly grease the base and sides of an 850ml / 1½pt pie dish. Arrange the apple slices in the base of the dish and sprinkle with the lemon zest and juice. Add the sugar, sprinkling evenly over the top.
2 Place the pudding mix in a bowl. Beat in the egg and water until smooth. Spoon the mixture over the apples and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8 minutes. Leave to stand for 3 minutes.
3 For an appetizing appearance, brown quickly under the grill.

Microtips

When cooking sponge mixtures with a fresh fruit base, avoid using full power, as this tends to draw moisture from the fruit and makes the sponge soggy.

Saucy sponge pudding

11 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 quantity Traditional sponge pudding (see page 693)

SAUCE
385g / 13½oz can blackcurrant pie filling
grated zest and juice of 1 orange

SERVES 6

1 Prepare a 10 × 20cm / 4 × 8in dish by greasing and lining with crumbs, as in the recipe, page 693.
2 Prepare the Traditional sponge pudding mixture and spread evenly in the dish.
3 Microwave according to the recipe, turning every minute. Leave to stand for 2 minutes.
4 While the sponge is standing, mix the pie filling with the orange zest and juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until hot through, stirring twice.
5 Turn the sponge out on to a warm serving dish and pour the sauce over the top.

VARIATION
Use another flavoured pie filling such as cherry, for the sauce.

Below: *Eve's Pudding and Saucy Sponge Pudding*

Primrose puddings

3¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

40ml / 8tsp lemon curd
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, softened
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
grated zest of ½ lemon
1 egg, beaten
2-3 drops yellow food colouring
60ml / 4tbls self-raising flour, sifted
45ml / 3tbls lemon curd
juice of ½ lemon, strained

SERVES 4

1 Lightly grease the sides of four 200ml / 7fl oz paper cups. Put 10ml / 2tsp lemon curd into each one.
2 Place the butter or margarine in a bowl, and beat with the sugar and lemon zest until light and fluffy.
3 Beat in the egg and colouring, then fold in the flour. Divide the mixture evenly between the cups.
4 Cover each one with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
5 Remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 2 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the lemon curd and juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds.
6 Turn the puddings out of the cups, loosening the edges with a palette knife if necessary, and spoon the sauce over the tops. Serve immediately.

Orange and ginger pudding

9¼ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
1 large orange
60ml / 4tbls fresh brown bread crumbs
50g / 2oz drained ginger in syrup, chopped

SPONGE
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
grated zest of ½ orange
2 eggs
100g / 4oz self-raising flour

SAUCE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt orange juice
juice of ½ lemon
15-30ml / 1-2tbls sugar

SERVES 4-6

1 Lightly grease the sides of an 18cm / 7in soufflé dish. Place the butter in the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds to melt. Stir in the demerara sugar and spread to coat the base.
2 Finely grate the zest from half of the orange and set aside. Cut the top and the base from the orange and slice off the rind and the pith. Slice the orange into 6mm / ¼in rounds and remove the pips. Arrange the slices over the coated base.
3 Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the base and press down lightly. Scatter the chopped ginger evenly over the top.
4 To make the sponge, beat the butter or margarine with the sugar and reserved orange zest until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs then fold in the flour.
5 Spoon the mixture into the soufflé dish and spread evenly. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, turning twice. Leave to stand while making the sauce.
6 Mix the cornflour with the orange and lemon juices in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice. Add sugar to taste. Turn out the pudding and serve hot with the sauce.

Microtips

Store leftover sponge pudding wrapped in cling film in the refrigerator when cold. To freshen up one serving, unwrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Serve immediately while still warm.

Chocolate pudding

10½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

100g / 4oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
45ml / 3tbls cocoa powder
100g / 4oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz soft margarine
few drops of vanilla flavouring
2 eggs, beaten
75ml / 5tbls milk

MOCHA SAUCE
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
150ml / ¼pt hot black coffee
150ml / ¼pt milk
15ml / 1tsp cornflour
30-45ml / 2-3tbls sugar

SERVES 4-6

1 Lightly grease a 1.1L / 2pt pudding basin. Sift the flour, baking powder and cocoa into a bowl and add the sugar, margarine, vanilla, egg and milk. Beat using an electric whisk for 1 minute or by hand for 2 minutes.

2 Spoon the mixture into the prepared basin, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, turning twice. Stand for 2 minutes.

3 To make the sauce, break the chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes to melt.

4 Stir in the coffee. Gradually blend the milk into the cornflour then stir into the sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until boiling. Stir twice during cooking. Stir in sugar to taste.

5 Turn out the pudding and serve hot with the mocha sauce.

Microtips

Cover fruit or liquid mixtures in the base of sponge puddings with a layer of fresh breadcrumbs before adding the sponge mixture. This absorbs any excess moisture in the fruit and helps to prevent the sponge from becoming too moist and soggy during microwaving.

Layer pudding

8½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

175g / 6oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
2 eggs, beaten
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring
few drops green food colouring
few drops peppermint flavouring
75ml / 5tbls cocoa powder
15ml / 1tbls milk

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring

SERVES 4-6

1 Lightly grease a 1.1L / 2pt pudding basin. Reserve 30ml / 2tbls of the flour, then sift the rest into a mixing bowl with the baking powder and salt. Add the butter or margarine, sugar and eggs. Beat together using an electric mixer for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes.

2 Divide the mixture between three small mixing bowls. (Spoon the mixture so that the quantity is the same in each bowl). Beat the vanilla flavouring into the first and the green colouring and flavouring into the second.

3 Sift the cocoa powder and the reserved flour into the third bowl. Mix in the milk and stir until smooth.

4 Spoon the vanilla mixture into the pudding basin and smooth the top. Add the peppermint mixture and level the top, then add the chocolate mixture.

5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, turning twice during cooking. Leave to stand for 2 minutes.

6 Meanwhile, mix all the sauce ingredients in a heatproof jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes until boiling and thickened, stirring twice.

7 Turn the pudding out on to a warm dish. Serve with the sauce.

Chiffons

Even after a filling meal, there's always room for a frothy, light chiffon dessert. Try any of the refreshing flavours — whichever you choose, you'll get good results faster by microwave.

Whether you make a traditional chiffon using gelatine and egg whites or choose the short-cut method, gentle, indirect microwave heat is ideal for these light desserts.

Both methods involve the basic technique of melting. For traditional chiffons, the microwave can instantly dissolve gelatine — no need, as in conventional recipes, to dissolve the gelatine in water and then to stir it into another mixture. Indeed, heating all the ingredients together eliminates the danger of 'roping' which causes lumps and uneven setting when a gelatine solution is added to a cooler mixture.

The short-cut method for chiffons uses marshmallows, melted by microwave. Direct heat would burn the delicate sugary mixture, but chiffons can be made in two easy stages without burning, with the cream folded in before chilling.

Chiffon pies are generally unsuitable for freezing as they will weep when thawed, and consequently collapse. However, you can keep a supply of ready-cooked pastry cases in the freezer. They can be thawed quickly and filled

Quick Orange Chiffon Pie

with chiffons which can be microwaved in minutes. Even so, time must be allowed for setting.

Chiffons served in dessert glasses can be frozen, undecorated, for short spells. Wrap closely and freeze for up to 3 weeks. To serve, microwave unwrapped at 25% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes per serving, depending on volume.

In both traditional and short-cut chiffons one mixture is folded into another. Use a large metal spoon and light folding movements so as to retain volume. If necessary, chill for 30 minutes, then turn into a pastry case or glasses to set.

Cook's notes

When cutting marshmallows for short-cut chiffons, use a pair of kitchen scissors to snip them into quarters. Dip the blades of the scissors in warm water from time to time to prevent them from sticking.

Quick orange chiffon pie

1 min

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz white marshmallows, cut in small pieces
45ml / 3tbls milk
finely grated zest and juice of 2 oranges
4 drops of yellow food colouring
1 small drop of red food colouring (optional)
275ml / ½pt whipping cream
23cm / 9in cooked Digestive crumb case (see page 32)

DECORATION
slices of orange
grated chocolate

SERVES 8

1 In a mixing bowl, combine the marshmallows and milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until the marshmallows have melted. Stir gently until smooth.
2 Stir in the orange zest, 45ml / 3tbls of the juice and the colouring if liked. Allow to cool until thickened but not set.
3 Whip the cream until stiff, then fold three-quarters of it into the marshmallow mixture, using a large metal spoon. Turn into the cooked crumb case and spread evenly with a palette knife.
4 Chill the pie for 2 hours until completely set. Just before serving, pipe the remaining cream on the top and decorate with orange slices and grated chocolate.

VARIATIONS
Quick lime chiffon pie: Substitute the grated zest and juice of 2 limes for the orange. Use a little green and yellow food colouring if liked. Decorate with slices of lime or lemon.
Quick lemon chiffon pie: Substitute the grated zest and juice of 1 lemon for the orange.

How to microwave short-cut chiffon fillings

Mix *the marshmallows with the milk in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring twice during the cooking time.*

Cool *the mixture until thick but not set. It should stay in mounds when dropped from a spoon and hold its shape in the bowl.*

Whip *the cream until stiff and fold into the marshmallow mixture. This should remain thick; if not, chill before using to fill the cooked pie case.*

Quick Pumpkin Chiffon Pie

Cook's notes

How to fold mixtures together: make cutting, figure-of-eight movements to fold one mixture over the other; work from one edge of the bowl, taking the spoon down to the bottom and across the centre, turning the bowl as you do so. Continue until evenly combined.

If one mixture is stiff, first stir in a little of the thinner or lighter one to 'loosen' it before folding in the rest.

Quick pumpkin chiffon pie

1 min

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370) or Digestive crumb case (see page 32)

FILLING

225g / 8oz canned pumpkin or 275g / 10oz pumpkin, cooked, drained and puréed (or similar sized can of apple purée)
45ml / 3tbls milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
pinch of salt
225g / 8oz white marshmallows, cut in small pieces
finely grated zest of 1 orange
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine all the filling ingredients except the cream in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until melted, stirring after 1 minute. Stir well. Cool until thickened but not set.
2 Whip the cream until stiff, then fold into the pumpkin. Spread in the case; chill for about 2 hours.

Raspberry chiffon cream

5 mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz raspberries
100g / 4oz caster sugar
15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
45ml / 3tbls water
2 eggs, separated
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
pieces of angelica to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Reserve six raspberries. In a bowl mix the remaining raspberries and half of the sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir every 2 minutes. Cool, then purée.
2 In a bowl, sprinkle the gelatine over the water, stir in the egg yolks and raspberry purée. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes or until hot. Stir every minute. Cool until nearly set.
3 Whisk the egg whites until standing in soft peaks. Gradually whisk in the remaining sugar until glossy. Whip the cream until stiff. Gently fold into the gelatine mixture, then fold in the egg whites.
4 Spoon mixture into six glasses; chill until set. Top with a raspberry and angelica pieces.

Freezer notes

To freeze chiffons without pie or biscuit crusts, for serving in glasses, use microwave freezer glasses. Wrap each glass tightly in cling film and freeze. To serve, unwrap and microwave at 20% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes per serving. Stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Cook's notes

Never drop food colouring directly into a mixture; measure on to a teaspoon before adding it to the mixture. This prevents overcolouring. Mix thoroughly before adding any additional colouring to the mixture.

Lemon chiffon pie

2 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
45ml / 3tbls water
100g / 4oz caster sugar
3 eggs, separated
grated rest and juice of 1 large lemon
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)

DECORATION
slices of lemon
few sprigs of fresh mint

SERVES 8

1 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water and half of the sugar in a bowl. Stir well, then add the egg yolks, lemon zest and juice.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes or until the mixture is hot, stirring after every minute. Do not allow to boil. Cool the mixture until nearly set.
3 Whisk the egg whites until they stand in soft peaks. Gradually whisk in the remaining sugar until thick and glossy.
4 Whip the cream until stiff. Fold the cream and egg whites into the cooled gelatine mixture using a large metal spoon.
5 Spread in the prepared pastry case. Chill until set, then decorate.

Lime chiffon

2 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
45ml / 3tbls water
100g / 4oz caster sugar
3 eggs, separated
finely grated zest and juice of 2 limes
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
slices of lime to decorate

SERVES 4-6

1 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water and half of the sugar in a bowl. Mix well, then add the egg yolks, lime zest and juice.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes, or until hot, stirring after a minute. Do not boil.
3 Cool until thick but not set.
4 Whisk the egg whites until they stand in soft peaks. Gradually whisk in remaining sugar until thick and glossy.
5 Whip the cream until stiff. Fold the cream and egg white into the gelatine mixture.
6 Spoon into individual glasses or a large glass bowl. Chill well and decorate with slices of lime. (To freeze in the glass, see page 699).

Above: *Lemon Chiffon Pie*
Below: *Lime Chiffon*

Using unusual shapes

Exploit the microwave to the full and use unconventional containers which could not be used in the conventional oven to make these exciting recipes.

Many cardboard, paper and polystyrene food containers can be used in the microwave or used as moulds for food that has been prepared in the microwave.

A cooking container will only become hot when the food inside it transmits its own heat. (This is true of all except foil and metal containers — these deflect microwaves and should not be used.) As a result, many containers, which could not be used in the conventional oven, can be used in the microwave cooker to produce novel dishes. As well as paper or plastic cups or cartons, other suitable containers are ice cream cones and heatproof measuring jugs (see recipes, pages 704 and 702).

Look around the kitchen and you might find other interesting containers. Some rules must still be observed to ensure the container can withstand buckling, distortion or burning when certain foods are cooked in it. Test containers following the steps and checks, right.

Boston Brown Bread

To test containers for suitability

Check *for buckling if cooking mixtures with a low fat content: half fill small containers with water and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.*

Check *for buckling or burns if cooking with fat: add 25g / 1oz fat to container; microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.*

SIMON BUTCHER

Check *a container carefully for metal screws or trims — they are not suitable. Pay particular attention to handles which may be riveted on.*

Boston brown bread

10 mins

Standing time: none

A heatproof measuring jug gives the correct shape for this traditional American bread. Cornmeal is available from some health food shops and supermarkets.

75g / 3oz self-raising flour
75g / 3oz wholewheat flour
75g / 3oz cornmeal
75g / 3oz raisins
75g / 3oz molasses or black treacle
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, melted
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
275ml / ½pt milk

MAKES 2 LOAVES

Line *the base of a 575ml / 1pt jug with greaseproof paper. Pour in half the mixture. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, until centre springs back when pressed. Half turn jug once.*

How to microwave Boston brown bread

Combine *all the ingredients except the bicarbonate of soda and milk in a large bowl. Smoothly blend the bicarbonate with a little of the milk, then add to the bowl with the remaining milk. Mix thoroughly to blend.*

Cool *the bread in the jug for 5 minutes, then turn out. Repeat with remaining mixture. To refresh cold slices: arrange around the edge of a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 seconds.*

Cheese and onion towers

9 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Use yoghurt cartons to make these unusual crêpe pies. Serve as an unusual appetizer.

6 Basic crêpes (see page 464)
sliced tomato and chopped parsley to garnish

FILLING
225g / 8oz onions, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Using scissors, trim away the tops of six cartons to make containers about 4cm / 1½in deep. Line the inside of each carton with a crêpe, leaving the overhang to cover the top after the filling has been added.
2 Place the chopped onions in a bowl with the butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in the cheese, then the egg. Season to taste.
3 Arrange the crêpe-lined cartons in a circle on a flat plate. Divide the cheese mixture between the cartons, then neatly fold the overhang over the top. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-7 minutes until the filling is just set.
4 Leave to stand for 2 minutes, then turn out and garnish.

Cheese and Onion Towers

SIMON BUTCHER

Freezer notes

This sweet bread freezes very well for up to 6 months and is ideal to have as a standby for unexpected guests. Wrap the loaf in a polythene bag, label and freeze.

To thaw and reheat, open the bag and microwave each loaf at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Leave the loaf to stand in the bag for 3-4 minutes, then serve warm with plenty of butter.

Cook's notes

There are many containers with a similar shape to yoghurt cartons which can be used as moulds for the Cheese and Onion Towers. Try the polystyrene containers available from delicatessens, or cottage cheese or cream cartons and just trim them down to size.

Alternatively you can use heatproof coffee cups or small plastic basins.

Craft-dough basket

20 mins

Standing time: none

Craft dough, not intended for eating, is easy to shape and sets well to make all kinds of attractive items. Start with the Craft-Dough Basket, then experiment with your own ideas. Alum, available very cheaply from chemists, is added to help the microwaved dough dry and harden. Although it is not harmful in such small quantities, the packet should be kept out of children's reach.

To give the unmoulded microwaved basket a protective varnish paint both sides with polyurethane or lacquer.

100g / 4oz plain flour
50g / 2oz salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp powdered alum
65ml / 2½fl oz water
575ml / 1pt bowl, lightly greased on the outside with oil

MAKES 225g / 8oz DOUGH

1 Sift the flour, salt and alum into a bowl. Stir in the water and mix well to form a stiff dough, adding a little more water if necessary.
2 Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface until smooth and pliable.
3 If the dough becomes too stiff, sprinkle lightly with water and knead in. If dough is too moist, knead in more flour until the correct consistency is achieved. Wrap in cling film or a plastic bag and store in a cool place if not using immediately.

How to microwave a Craft-dough basket

Roll *out dough 6mm /¼in thick. Use a pastry wheel or sharp knife and ruler to cut eight 12mm / ½in-wide strips long enough to go over the bowl with an overhang on either side.*

Use *the eight dough strips to weave base of the basket; drape four strips, spaced equally apart, over the base, then weave the remaining four strips at right angles over the base.*

Cut *strips long enough to go around bowl; weave in and out of first set until sides are completely covered. Brush ends of side strips with water; press together to seal, then trim.*

Roll *out two equal pieces of dough to make two ropes to go around bowl rim. Plait together to make a cord; moisten bowl rim and press cord in place. Transfer to roasting rack.*

Microwave *at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes, rotating 2-3 times. Microwave for 16 minutes until surface is dry. Rotate every 2 minutes. Unmould after 10-12 hours. Varnish next day.*

Cake cornets

11½ mins

Standing time: none

Ice cream cones make a novel container for an easy all-in-one cake mixture.

75g / 3oz self-raising flour
50g / 2oz caster sugar
50g / 2oz margarine, softened
1 egg
15ml / 1tbls water or fruit juice
8 ice cream cones

ICING:
50g / 2oz icing sugar, sifted
25g / 1oz soft tub margarine
few drops of food colouring

MAKES 8 CONE CAKES

1 Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the sugar, margarine and egg and beat with an electric whisk for 1 minute until blended. Add sufficient water or fruit juice to give a soft dropping consistency.

2 Divide half the cake mixture between 4 ice cream cones supported in a cardboard rack, (see steps below). Microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, until the mixture is well risen and springy. Repeat with the remaining mixture and cake cones.

3 Cream the icing sugar with the margarine until fluffy. Tint with a few drops of food colouring, then use to ice the top of the cakes.

VARIATION
The cake mixture can be flavoured with grated orange or lemon rest. Sprinkle a little chopped chocolate into the tip of the cones before adding the cake mixture. Alternatively, dip the iced cakes in chocolate vermicelli or coloured sugar strands, or spike each with a mini chocolate flake.

Cake Cornets

How to support Cake cornets

Use *a cardboard box, about 7.5cm / 3in deep as a rack. Turn it upside down. Cut 4 holes, 2.5cm / 1in in diameter, in the base, well apart.*

Insert *an ice cream cone into each hole so it is held firmly upright. Fill each cone with cake mixture and microwave in the cardboard rack.*

Mini smoked fish quiches

12 mins

Standing time: none

Here is an ingenious way to cook miniature quiches in the microwave using the rim of a paper beaker as a mould. You may have to vary the size of your pastry cutter according to the size of the beaker.

100g / 4oz soft margarine
225g / 8oz plain flour
salt
2.5ml / ½tsp celery seeds
5ml / 1tsp paprika
water to bind

FILLING
150ml / ¼pt single cream
2 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz smoked mackerel fillets, skinned and flaked
30ml / 2tbls snipped chives
pepper

MAKES 18 QUICHES

1 Using a sharp knife, cut a 12mm / ½in-deep ring from the top of each of six paper beakers. Arrange the rings in a circle on a large flat plate.

2 Rub the margarine into the flour until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in a pinch of salt, the celery seeds and the paprika. Stir in about 45ml / 3tbls cold water and mix to a dough.

3 Knead the dough lightly, then roll out fairly thinly. Cut into 18 rounds using a 7.5cm / 3in round pastry cutter.

4 Use six pastry rounds to line the rings. Prick each base with a fork, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the pastry feels dry and looks opaque.

5 Mix the cream, eggs, mackerel and chives together. Season with pepper. Spoon 15ml / 1tbls filling into each cooked pastry case. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-3 minutes until set except in the very centre.

6 Cool slightly, then remove from the rings and transfer to a wire rack. Use the remaining pastry rounds and filling to make more mini quiches. Cook in two batches.

American fudge pops

5 mins

Standing time: none

35g / 1¼oz sachet chocolate blancmange powder *
425ml / ¾pt milk
45ml / 3tbls sugar
10 marshmallows
50g / 2oz shelled peanuts
50g / 2oz chocolate chips

MAKES 6

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use 90ml / 4½tbls cornflour, combined with 20ml / 1tbls cocoa powder to replace the chocolate blancmange powder, then follow the steps below.

How to microwave American fudge pops

Blend *blancmange powder with milk in a 1.4L / 2½pt jug. Stir in sugar and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Stir every 1½ minutes.*

Scatter *the marshmallows on top, then microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until just melted. Gently swirl through sauce to give a marbled effect.*

Leave *the chocolate mixture to cool and thicken. Mix together peanuts and chocolate chips, then divide equally between six paper cups.*

Add *a little of the cool chocolate blancmange-mallow mixture to each cup and stir carefully to mix with the nuts and chocolate chips.*

Divide *the remaining chocolate mixture equally among the six cups. Insert a lolly-pop stick into the centre of each fudge pop.*

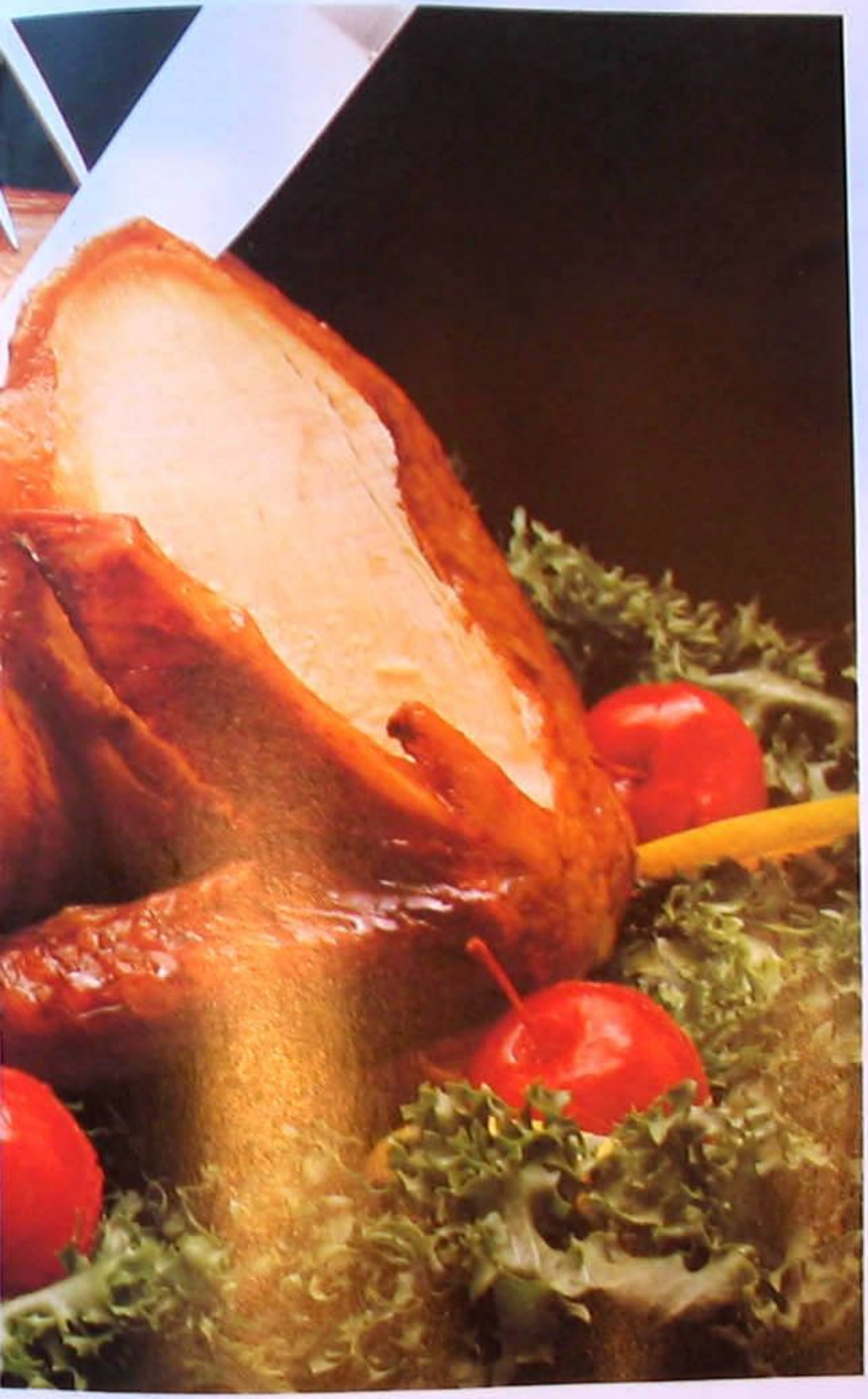
Freeze *the fudge pops for at least 4 hours, or until firmly set. To serve, peel the paper cups away from the frozen pops.*

Microwaving whole turkey

Cooking turkey the conventional way can be a daunting experience — even for the experienced cook. However, the microwave makes the job easy and the turkey cooks beautifully in under half the conventional time.

By using the microwave to cook a whole turkey, the problem of accurate timing (so critical for moist, succulent results) is easily solved and the cooking is completed in under half the time it would take conventionally.

There should be about 5cm / 2in clear space between the turkey and the cooker walls, so bear this in mind before buying the turkey. As a guide an average-sized microwave with a cooker capacity about 35.5cm / 14in (deep), 35.5cm / 14in (wide) and 28cm / 11in (high), holds a 5.4-5.9kg / 12-13lb whole turkey comfortably. The maximum size turkey most larger de-luxe microwaves can take is a 6.3-6.8kg / 14-15lb bird.



Glazed turkey on a bed of endive, garnished with maraschino cherries

Buying and storing

Turkeys are available either fresh, chilled or frozen, in a range of sizes. Whichever you buy, the breast should be plump and white (with no dark bruising), and the drumsticks firm and rounded. For a fresh, oven-ready bird, check for a pliable breastbone as this indicates a young, tender bird. Chilled turkeys are prewrapped, with the giblets packed separately inside them, and are available from butchers and supermarkets. Frozen turkeys are sold oven-ready and are the cheapest to buy. Complete thawing is essential before cooking to ensure the bird will be tender and safe to eat.

A fresh turkey, loosely covered on a plate, will keep for up to two days in the refrigerator.

Glazing the turkey

To help keep the turkey flesh juicy and appetizing and give the skin its golden brown appearance it is necessary to glaze the turkey before cooking. There are several glazes to choose from (see recipe and variations page 708).

Stuffing the turkey

Although a stuffing is not essential, it is always a popular addition to a turkey meal. In the microwave a stuffed turkey cooks in the same time as an unstuffed bird, provided that the neck cavity — **not** the body cavity — is stuffed. Alternatively make the stuffing into balls and cook these while the turkey is completing its standing time (see recipes page 710).

Accompaniments

To complete the meal, don't forget the trimmings. Serve the turkey with traditional accompaniments like Brussels sprouts, carrots and potatoes, plus Bread Sauce (page 620), Cranberry Sauce (page 628) and Rich Giblet Gravy (page 709).

How to microwave whole turkey

Stuff *the neck cavity of the oven-ready turkey, if liked (see recipes page 710). Truss the bird if necessary to keep shape during cooking and secure the loose neck skin with a wooden cocktail stick. Weigh the turkey and calculate the cooking time (see the chart page 709); divide the cooking time into quarters. Place the turkey, breast-side down, in a large shallow dish.*

Brush *with a glaze (see recipe, above right). Microwave at 100% (High) for one quarter of calculated cooking time. Turn turkey on one side, brush with glaze and juices in dish. Cook at 100% (High) for another quarter of calculated time. Turn on to other side, baste again and cook for the third quarter calculated time. (If some areas begin to overbrown, shield with well secured small pieces of smooth foil.)*

Turn *the turkey breast-side up and baste well. Microwave at 100% (High) for remaining cooking time; baste turkey every 10-15 minutes. Drain off juices and reserve for making gravy (see recipe opposite). Cover turkey with a tent of foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand (see chart page 709).*

To test *if the turkey is cooked: drumsticks will move freely at the joints; flesh will feel very soft when pressed. The juices should run clear when fleshy part under leg is pierced with a fine skewer. If juices appear pink, continue cooking for a further few minutes.*

Basic turkey glaze

½ min

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce

SUFFICIENT FOR GLAZING A 5.4kg / 12lb TURKEY

1 Put the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted.
2 Stir in the soy sauce.

VARIATIONS
Spiced glaze: omit the soy sauce and add 2.5ml / ½tsp turmeric to the melted butter.
Tangy glaze: add the finely grated zest of ½ lemon to the Basic Turkey Glaze.
Herb glaze: add 5ml / 1tsp dried oregano to the Basic Turkey Glaze.

Cook's notes

Once the standing time is completed, an additional check (when testing turkey is cooked) can be carried out using a conventional meat thermometer. Insert the thermometer into the joint between the thigh and breast, rotate it two or three times and allow 1 minute for an accurate reading. If the turkey is cooked it will register 85°C / 185°F; if not, remove the thermometer and cook for a further few minutes before testing again. Do not use the meat thermometer when microwaving the turkey in the cooker; a microwave thermometer, however, can be used — follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Rich giblet gravy

13 mins

Standing time: none

turkey giblets, defrosted if frozen
575ml / 1pt boiling water
1 large onion, cut into quarters
salt and pepper
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls cold water
a few drops of gravy browning
meat juices from cooked turkey
10ml / 2tsp sherry

SERVES 8

1 Put the giblets into a bowl with the boiling water, onion and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stirring twice during cooking.
2 Blend the cornflour with the cold water in a separate bowl. Strain the giblet stock into bowl, stirring well all the time. Add a few drops gravy browning. Skim off any fat from surface of reserved turkey juices; add juices to the bowl. Stir in sherry.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring twice until smooth and thickened. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.

Freezer notes

If using frozen giblets: put giblets into a bowl, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-3 minutes until thawed.

Cook's notes

You may like to remove the liver from the giblets before making the stock as it can sometimes give a rather strong flavour.

Freezer notes

If using a frozen turkey: unwrap and weigh the turkey and calculate the thawing time, allowing 3½-5½ minutes per 450g / 1lb. Place turkey, breast side down, in a shallow dish and microwave at 30% (Medium) for quarter of calculated thawing time. Shield warm areas with well secured small, smooth pieces of foil, turn turkey breast side up and microwave for a further quarter of the time. Check for warm or brown spots and shield with smooth pieces of foil, if necessary. Shield legs and wing tips; turn turkey over, rotate dish and microwave for half the remaining time. Turn turkey over and microwave for the remaining thawing time. Make sure the body cavity of turkey is cool but not icy before cooking.

Microwave times* for whole turkey

TURKEY SIZE	COOKING TIME (with or without stuffing)	STANDING TIME (tented with foil)	NUMBER OF SERVINGS
2.7kg / 6lb	42 mins	10 mins	6-8
4kg / 9lb	1 hr 3 mins	15 mins	10-12
5.4-5.9kg / 12-13lb	1 hr 24 mins-1hr 31 mins	20 mins	14-16
6.8kg / 15lb	1 hr 45 mins	25 mins	18

**Times are calculated at 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb at 100% (High)*

Microtips

Giblets should always be cooked on the day of purchase. Use giblets for stock, if not making Rich Giblet Gravy. Add 275ml / ½pt of boiling water to giblets, sliced carrot, onion, celery and season. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes. Strain.

How to carve whole turkey

Hold *the drumstick and pull away from the body. Cut between thigh and body to the leg joint. Pull leg out and back, using point of a knife to sever it. Cut off drumstick from thigh at joint. Slice the thigh and drumstick meat parallel to the bone.*

Make *a long horizontal cut above the wing joint into the body frame of the turkey. Ease the wing away from the body and cut through the gristle using the point of a knife to sever the wing joint from the body of the bird. Repeat this on other side of the bird.*

Beginning *halfway up the breast, cut thin even slices parallel with the breast bone down to a horizontal cut made above the wing joint. Continue slicing the white breast meat in this way, then carve the breast meat on other side of the bird in the same way.*

Artichoke nut stuffing balls

11 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz walnuts, chopped
175g / 6oz fresh breadcrumbs
400g / 14oz can artichoke hearts, thoroughly drained on absorbent paper and chopped
10ml / 2tsp dried oregano
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

SERVES 8

1 Put the onion, celery, bacon and butter into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until onion and celery have softened, stirring once.
2 Add the chopped walnuts, breadcrumbs, artichoke hearts, oregano, egg and seasoning to taste; mix thoroughly. Form mixture into 16 even-sized balls, using lightly floured hands.
3 Arrange these in a circle around the edge of a large plate. (Place any remaining balls in the centre.) Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until just firm.

Microtips

For convenience, make and cook the stuffing balls in advance. Reheat them at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes while the turkey completes its standing time.

Freezer notes

Frozen cranberries can be used instead of the fresh berries. Put the cranberries on a plate and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes, rearranging every minute, then follow the recipe instructions. Canned cranberries, well drained, can also be substituted; follow recipe instructions from Step 2.

Cranberry spice stuffing

5½ mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz fresh cranberries *
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 onion, finely chopped
225g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
100g / 4oz fresh breadcrumbs
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
salt and pepper

FOR A 5.4kg / 12lb TURKEY

1 Put the cranberries into a bowl with the sugar and water. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until cranberries have softened.
2 Place butter and onion in a separate bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until

onion has softened, stirring once.
3 Beat the cranberry and onion mixtures together, then add the sausagemeat, breadcrumbs, parsley, allspice and seasoning to taste; mix well until thoroughly combined.
4 Use to stuff the neck cavity of the turkey.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use drained, canned cranberries, added at step 3.

Turkey with chilli beans

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

When you need a tasty supper in a hurry, this Mexican-style dish using leftover turkey meat and red kidney beans should fit the bill.

1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
225-275g / 8-10oz cooked turkey meat, diced
227g / 8oz can tomatoes, broken up
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
425g / 15oz can red kidney beans, drained
5ml / 1tsp mild chilli seasoning
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
salt and pepper
1 ripe avocado, skinned and sliced
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, garlic and oil into a large dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in the turkey, tomatoes, tomato purée, beans, chilli seasoning, 30ml / 2tbls of the soured cream and season.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the mixture is heated through and thickened slightly, stirring once.
4 Swirl the remaining soured cream into mixture and top with slices of avocado, tossed in lemon juice. Cover; stand for 5 minutes.

Turkey with Artichoke Nut Stuffing Balls and accompaniments

Turkey and bacon kebabs

7½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Use up leftover cooked turkey meat in this fun recipe that is quick to make and would serve as ideal party time nibbles.

175g / 6oz streaky bacon rashers, rinded; cut in half crossways
45ml / 3tbls mango chutney
225g / 8oz cooked turkey meat, cut into 12mm / ½in chunks
1 small onion, quartered and separated into layers
1 small red pepper, seeded and cut into 12 pieces

SAUCE
1 banana, peeled and mashed
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
150ml / 5fl oz natural yoghurt
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Spread the halved bacon rashers with 30ml / 2tbls of chutney. Wrap bacon around turkey chunks, chutney-sides in.
2 Thread the turkey rolls, onion layers and pieces of red pepper alternately on to four wooden or bamboo skewers.
3 Space skewers well apart on a large plate and cover with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7½-9 minutes, until bacon is cooked. Turn twice and drain off any liquid. Stand for 3 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, mix together the mashed banana, lemon juice, yoghurt, remaining chopped chutney and seasoning. Serve kebabs with yoghurt sauce.

Cook's notes

Although leftover cooked turkey is ideal for this dish, fresh turkey fillets, diced, can also be used. Add to the garlic and onion mixture after 3 minutes and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 4-6 minutes, stirring once. Add tomatoes, tomato purée, beans, chilli and cream; then follow recipe instructions.

Microtips

Remember that metal kebab skewers cannot be used in the microwave. Bamboo skewers are available from good food shops or oriental stores. These wooden skewers are sold in packets, containing 40-50. If you have difficulty finding them, use wooden cocktail sticks instead and allow three per person.

Microwaving chutneys

Making preserves no longer means hours spent in a steamy kitchen. With a microwave, delicious chutneys do not take long at all and will add a zing to many of your meals.

Making chutney is simplicity itself in a microwave. Ingredients are quickly prepared and cook all together until the right consistency is reached. Cooking takes 25 to 50 minutes, compared to the hours it can take to boil a chutney on a conventional cooker.

Batches will be smaller in the microwave but this can be an advantage if you do not want to make an enormous quantity or if you want to try out a recipe to see if you like it. For larger amounts, you can always microwave several batches one after the other.

The best receptacle to use in the cooker is a large heatproof bowl; it is best to err on the side of roominess as the chutney will be simmering at a high temperature and must not boil over. Apart from a bowl, all you will need are some clean jars in which to store the chutney. These will need lids that vinegar cannot corrode, or use vinegar-proof paper between jar and lid.

From left to right: *Mango Chutney, Plum Chutney, Date Chutney, Beetroot Chutney*

Suitable ingredients for chutney are soft vegetables and fruits (or those that soften readily like apples or onions). The fun lies in combining different main ingredients and spices with sugar and vinegar to make exciting blends of sweet and sharp flavours.

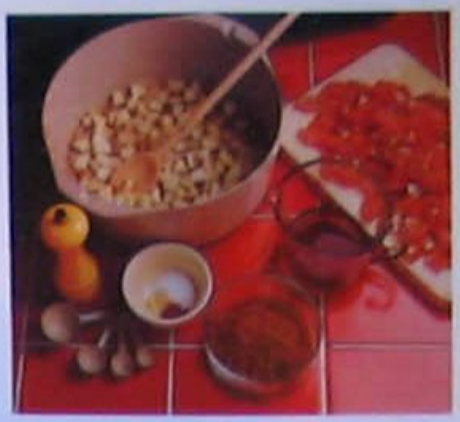
Vinegar is one of the essential ingredients of chutney; besides giving it its characteristic tartness, it is the vinegar that prevents the growth of micro-organisms and so makes the chutney keep. Sugar also acts as a preservative.

The longer chutney is kept before eating the better developed will be its flavour. Start to sample it after six weeks; all the chutneys here will keep up to 12 months.

DAVE KING

How to microwave chutney

Peel *or skin, stone and chop the fruit and vegetables roughly or finely as recipe specifies, discarding bruised parts. Measure vinegar, sugar, other ingredients and flavourings.*



Put *ingredients such as onions and peppers that need extra softening into a 4L / 7pt bowl with some of the vinegar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.*

Stir *in all the remaining ingredients, cover again and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-45 minutes. Start stirring after 10-15 minutes, then stir frequently.*

Remove *chutney from cooker when it is thick and pulpy; all the ingredients should be tender with some unevaporated liquid left in the bowl. Let stand for 10 minutes.*

Have *ready clean, dry, sterilized and warmed jars (page 570). Ladle in the hot chutney to within 12mm / ½in of the top of the jars. Wipe round the top edge of the jar with clean cloth.*

Cover *with vinegar-proof paper and a lid or with vinegar-proof screw tops. Store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks to allow flavour of chutney to mature. Use within 12 months.*

Tomato chutney

40 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

The tomatoes should be red and ripe but firm, not soft.

1 large onion, weighing 175g / 6oz, finely chopped
275ml / ½pt malt vinegar
700g / 1½lb tomatoes, skinned and chopped
1 large cooking apple, weighing 225g / 8oz, peeled, cored and chopped
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp pepper
good pinch cayenne pepper
good pinch dry mustard

MAKES ABOUT 900g / 2lb

1 Put the onion and 150ml / 5fl oz of the vinegar into a 4L / 7pt bowl, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients and microwave as in steps (page 713) for 35-40 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks before eating.

VARIATION
Instead of adding cooking apple, make the chutney with tomato only, in which case, use 900g / 2lb tomatoes. Grated orange zest or paprika can be added to vary the flavour.

Date chutney

25 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1 onion, weighing 100g / 4oz, finely chopped
825ml / 28fl oz malt vinegar
450g / 1lb ready-stoned dates, chopped
450g / 1lb raisins
250g / 9oz dark brown sugar
2 garlic cloves, crushed

DAVE KING

Tomato Chutney

4 green chillies, seeded and finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp mixed spice

MAKES ABOUT 1.8kg / 4lb

1 Place the onion and 150ml / 5fl oz of the vinegar in a 4L / 7pt bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients and microwave as in steps (page 713) for 20-25 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks.

VARIATION
Add a little grated lemon zest to the ingredients, or lime zest. For a nutty texture, add up to 75g / 3oz flaked or chopped almonds. Fresh dates can be used in the recipe; they will soften more quickly.

Beetroot chutney

35 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

2 large onions, weighing 350g / 12oz, finely chopped
675ml / 23fl oz malt vinegar
900g / 2lb fresh cooked beetroot, peeled and finely chopped
1 small cooking apple, weighing 100g / 4oz, peeled, cored and chopped
225g / 8oz raisins
350g / 12oz dark soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cloves
10ml / 2tsp ground allspice

MAKES ABOUT 2.3kg / 5lb

1 Put the onion and 150ml / 5fl oz of the vinegar into a 4L / 7pt bowl, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients and microwave as in steps

(page 713) for 30-35 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks before eating.

VARIATION
If you like, you can grate or shred the beetroot in a food processor instead of chopping it, and add tomato or rhubarb in place of the apple.

Mango chutney

40 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This slightly exotic chutney is an excellent accompaniment to hot curries.

3 ripe mangoes, weighing 1.4kg / 3lb
2 small green chillies, seeded and finely chopped
25g / 1oz piece fresh root ginger, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
275ml / ½pt cider vinegar
150g / 5oz dark soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger

MAKES ABOUT 900g / 2lb

1 Peel the mangoes, cut the flesh away from the stones and dice.
2 Put all the ingredients into a 4L / 7pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 40-45 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Let stand 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks.

VARIATION
If you like mangoes to have a chewy texture, cook them for less time by first microwaving the vinegar, sugar and seasonings together at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes. Then stir in the mangoes and microwave until pulpy.

For a hotter chutney, increase the root ginger to 75g / 3oz and add a large pinch of curry powder.

Pineapple Chutney

Pineapple chutney

25 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This ginger-flavoured chutney goes well with meats such as ham, sausages and chicken, and with cheese dishes. If you use pineapple rings or cubes, chop them finely.

1 onion, weighing 75g / 3oz, finely chopped
50g / 2oz green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
150ml / 5fl oz pineapple juice
3 × 376g / 13oz cans crushed pineapple, drained
1 garlic clove, crushed
100g / 4oz raisins
30ml / 2tbls crystallized ginger, finely chopped
75g / 3oz dark soft brown sugar
225ml / 8fl oz cider vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
good pinch of ground cinnamon
good pinch of ground cloves
good pinch of cayenne pepper

MAKES ABOUT 900g / 2lb

1 Put the onion, pepper and pineapple juice into a 4L / 7pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, and microwave as in steps (page 713) for 20-25 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put in warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks.

Cook's notes

Cider vinegar gives chutney a delicious mild flavour. Distilled vinegar is much stronger; as it is colourless it is suitable for a pale chutney. Use brown malt vinegar for a deeper colour.

Brown sugars are often used in chutneys for their colour, as well as their distinctive flavour.
Choose between dark or light sugar (using light brown in pale chutneys) and demerara sugar.

Pear and apple chutney

40 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a rich fruity chutney which is ideal to serve with cold meats such as pork and turkey or meat loaf made with beef. If you use harder cooking pears, soften them first with the onion and green pepper and half the vinegar before adding the other ingredients.

2 onions, weighing 225g / 8oz, finely chopped
100g / 4oz green pepper, finely chopped
275ml / ½pt cider vinegar
450g / 1lb dessert pears, peeled, cored and chopped
450g / 1lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
100g / 4oz dates, chopped
350g / 12oz dark soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp dry mustard
good pinch of ground cloves
good pinch of ground allspice
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1 bay leaf

MAKES ABOUT 1.4kg / 3lb

1 Put the onion, green pepper and half the vinegar into a 4L / 7pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in all the other ingredients and microwave as in steps (page 713) for 35-40 minutes, stirring often, until pulpy. Remove bay leaf. Stand 10 minutes.
3 Put in warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and store in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks.

Cook's notes

Spices are important chutney ingredients, adding both a rich colour and delicious flavour. Nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, cloves and mace are the most popular. Ground spices are frequently used, as they blend in smoothly. For a milder flavour, whole spices can be put in a bag and removed before the chutney is potted.

Plum chutney

45 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This chutney has a sharp spicy taste and is good served with strongly flavoured meats such a rabbit, turkey, duck and liver. Some plums have a fuller flavour than others so the chutney may vary from batch to batch if you use a different variety of plum.

2 large onions, weighing 350g / 12oz, finely chopped
850ml / 1½pt malt vinegar
900g / 2lb plums, stoned and chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
700g / 1½lb dark soft brown sugar

Pear and Apple Chutney

450g / 1lb sultanas
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
10ml / 2tsp dry mustard
15-30ml / 1-2tbls ground ginger
10ml / 2tsp ground allspice

MAKES ABOUT 2.5kg / 5½lb

1 Place the onion in a 4L / 7pt bowl with 150ml / 5fl oz of the vinegar. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in all the other ingredients and microwave as in steps (page 713) for 40-45 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the top. Cover and keep in a cool dark place for at least 6 weeks.

Ham dishes for the freezer

Cook up some tasty ham dishes for the freezer, using slices and chopped or minced leftovers from the joint and, with the help of the microwave, you will have a selection of convenient meals, ready to thaw and reheat at short notice.

Ham can be served in all manner of tasty ways, and provided you follow two simple rules can be frozen successfully, too. Firstly, because of the salt content in ham which shortens the storage life, dishes should not be frozen for longer than two months, after which time the flavour begins to deteriorate. Secondly, it is important to go lightly with the salt and pepper, as seasonings — especially salt — tend to intensify during freezing. So play safe and add more before serving, if necessary.

Always ensure the cooked dishes are completely cold before wrapping and freezing, and remember to label each item clearly with the name and date. The container should also be freezerproof and, if the food is to be reheated in the same dish, check that it is microwave safe.

Jambalaya

SIMON BUTCHER

Jambalaya

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

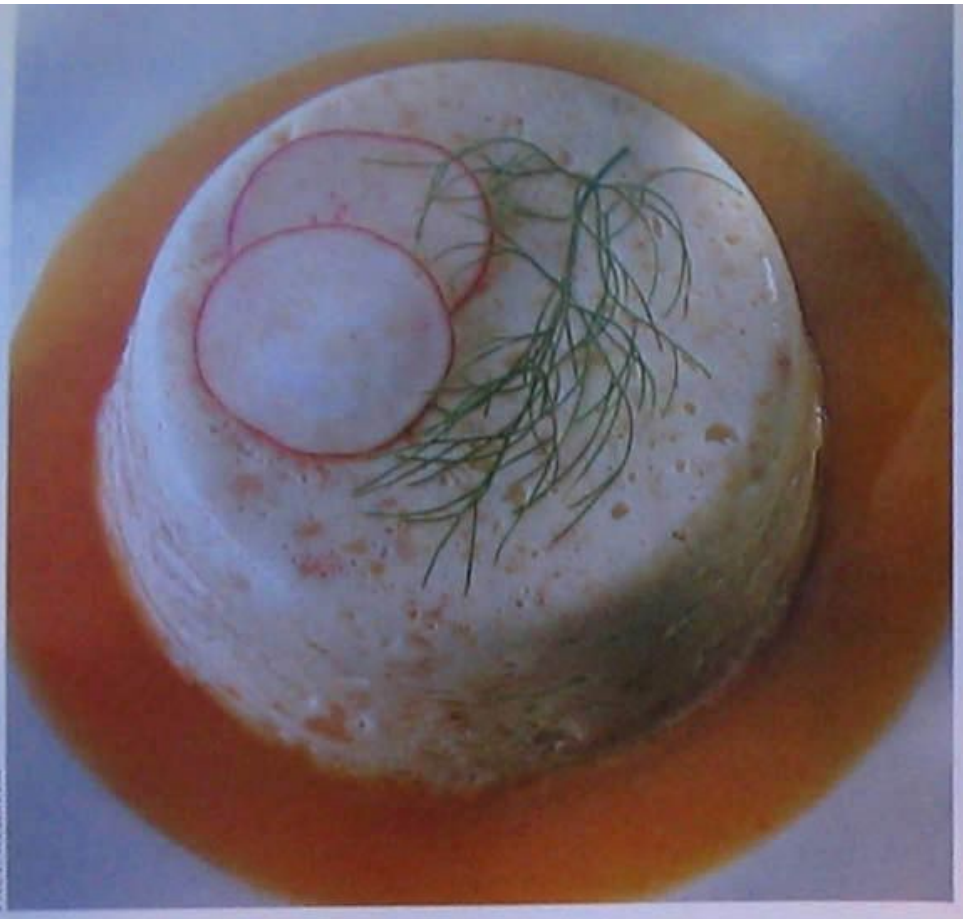
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
225ml / 8fl oz boiling ham stock *
794g / 1lb 12oz can tomatoes, chopped
75ml / 3fl oz boiling water
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
375g / 12oz easy cook, long-grain rice
450g / 1lb cooked ham, cubed
200g / 7oz garlic sausage, rind removed and diced

SERVES 6

1 Put the butter, oil, onion, chopped pepper and garlic into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until tender.
2 Stir in the boiling stock, tomatoes, boiling water and herbs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until boiling.
3 Stir in the rice, ham, and sausage. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 12-15 minutes, stirring 2 or 3 times during cooking. Let stand for 5 minutes. Season lightly to taste.
4 Place mixture in a freezerproof and microwave safe container. Cover when cold; label and freeze for no longer than 2 months.

To serve
Loosen the cover of the container and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, breaking apart with a fork once or twice. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 16-18 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes then fluff up with a fork and serve with a green salad.

Jambalaya for three: divide the mixture between two freezerproof and microwavesafe containers. Cover when completely cold; label and freeze for no longer than 2 months.



PAUL WEBSTER

Loosen the cover from one container and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Stock made with bacon stock cubes

Ham with leeks

16½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

8 leeks, trimmed and cleaned
75ml / 5tbls water
8 thin slices cooked ham

SAUCE
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
425ml / ¾pt milk
large pinch of ground mace or nutmeg
100g / 4oz Edam cheese, grated
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls dry breadcrumbs

SERVES 4

1 Place the leeks in a dish with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes until just tender, turning once. Let stand for 2-3 minutes.

Individual Ham Mousse

2 Drain thoroughly and pat dry on absorbent paper. Wrap each leek in a slice of ham and arrange in a freezerproof and microwave-safe dish.
3 Put the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in the flour, then whisk in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, whisking two or three times until thickened and boiling. Stir in the mace or nutmeg, 75g / 3oz of cheese, and season lightly. Pour the sauce over the ham and leek rolls.
4 Mix remaining cheese with breadcrumbs and sprinkle over the top. Leave to cool completely then cover, seal, label and freeze for no longer than 2 months.

To serve
Loosen cover from dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Uncover and reduce power to 50% (Medium). Microwave for 18-20 minutes, until heated through, rotating the dish two or three times. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with grilled tomatoes and warm granary bread.

Individual ham mousses

3½ mins

Standing time: none

Serve these mousses with slices of rye bread or bran crackers as starters, or with a rice salad for a light meal. Add a delicate garnish of radish slices and sprigs of fennel and, if liked, spoon a little Fresh Tomato Sauce around mousses just before serving (see Cook's notes).

150ml / ¼pt milk
1 bay leaf
large sprig of parsley
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2 eggs, separated
25ml / 5tsp powdered gelatine
150ml / ¼pt hot chicken stock
175g / 6oz cooked ham, finely minced
150ml / ¼pt double or whipping cream
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

Cook's notes

These ham mousses look especially pretty and taste superb when served with a Fresh Tomato Sauce. To make the sauce; skin 450g / 1lb ripe tomatoes, then purée in a food processor or blender. Sieve mixture (using a nylon sieve), then season to taste and chill before spooning around each mousse to flood the plate. The sauce provides a good colour contrast.

How to freeze and serve Individual ham mousses

For the white sauce: *place milk, bay leaf and parsley in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes to warm the mixture through and allow the flavours to infuse. Strain through a sieve and discard the herbs.*

Put *the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds until melted. Stir in flour, then whisk in milk. Microwave for 1½-2 minutes, whisking once or twice until thickened. Cool; whisk in egg yolks.*

Sprinkle *gelatine over stock in a jug; leave for 5 minutes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until dissolved. Cool slightly, then stir into sauce. Mix in ham and chill until the mixture is on the point of setting.*

Whisk *the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks; whip the cream until softly peaking. Using a large metal spoon, lightly fold the cream into the thickened ham mixture and then fold in the egg whites. Season to taste.*

To freeze: *divide the mousse mixture between six individual 150ml / ¼pt capacity, freezerproof and microwave-safe soufflé dishes or ramekins. Chill for 1 hour until set. Wrap, seal, label and freeze for no longer than 6 weeks.*

To serve: *uncover dishes and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 12-14 minutes, rotating dishes several times, until edges of mousses are soft but not melted. Stand for 25-30 minutes. Turn out and garnish.*

RAY DUNS

Double-cheese stuffed ham

9 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
225g / 8oz broccoli, frozen or fresh, cooked and chopped (see Microtips, below right)
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
salt and pepper
8 slices cooked ham

SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
225ml / 8fl oz milk
1 small onion, grated
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
10ml / 2tsp made English mustard

SERVES 8

1 Put the mushrooms and celery in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, until just tender, stirring once. Add the broccoli, breadcrumbs, Cheddar and cottage cheese. Season lightly. Cool completely.

2 Divide mixture between slices of ham. Roll up and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Wrap individually in cling film and pack in a container. Seal, label and freeze for no longer than 2 months.

To serve

Unwrap each roll and place in a large shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 17-18 minutes until hot, rotating dish and turning the rolls once. Stand for 3-4 minutes. Meanwhile, make the sauce: put the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds until melted. Stir in the flour, then whisk in the milk and grated onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, whisking two or three times until thickened and boiling. Stir in the chopped parsley, remaining cheese and mustard. Pour sauce over the ham rolls and serve with crusty bread or pasta, if preferred.

Double-cheese Stuffed Ham

Double-cheese stuffed ham for four: unwrap four of the rolls and arrange in a 20cm / 8in square dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 11-12 minutes until filling is hot, rotating dish and turning the rolls once. Make up sauce as directed using half quantity of ingredients; pour over rolls.

Double-cheese stuffed ham for two: unwrap two rolls and arrange in a 15 × 12.5cm / 6 × 5in shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes until filling is hot, rotating the dish and turning the rolls once. Make up sauce as directed, using a quarter of ingredients. Pour sauce over rolls.

VARIATION

Spinach may be used to replace the broccoli. Follow the cooking instructions given in chart (see page 187).

Cook's notes

Thawing and standing times before serving are not included in the recipe time boxes.

Microtips

To thaw and cook frozen broccoli: put broccoli in a bowl with 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes. Leave to stand for 2 minutes, then drain and chop. To lightly cook fresh broccoli: put broccoli in a bowl with 30ml / 2tbls water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes, the drain and chop, then follow Steps 1 and 2.